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RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

THE

RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

OF

J. R. PLANCHÉ,

(SOMERSET HERALD).

22833
ac

A Professional Autobiography.

"I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it."
OTHELLO, Act i., Scene 3.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1872.
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P 22893

LONDON:
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TO

MY DEAR GRANDCHILDREN

I Dedicate

THESE RECOLLECTIONS OF A LIFE

THE DECLINE OF WHICH HAS BEEN CHEERED BY THEIR SMILES

AND

BLESSED BY THEIR AFFECTION.

J. R. PLANCHÉ.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME of the anecdotes that will be found in the following pages appeared in the "LONDON SOCIETY" Monthly Magazine from April to October, 1871: but considerable additions have been made to them, and the "Recollections" which were brought to a close with the Proclamation of Peace, in 1856, have been continued to the present year. They are limited as strictly as possible to such public and professional matters as it appeared to me would be interesting to the general reader or on which I felt myself entitled to comment —avoiding reference to my own family and private affairs except where it was necessary for explanation, and rigidly observing the same reticence with respect to those of others.

J. R. P.

COLLEGE OF ARMS,
June, 1872.

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RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

It is well-nigh forty years ago since I wrote the following reply to a young friend who, on the part of a few gentlemen, had requested me to furnish them with some particulars respecting my "birth, parentage, and education, life, character, and behaviour," for the purpose of a memoir in a new biographical work they had projected—I believe entitled "The Georgian Æra."

"Dear Walter,*—What do your friends mean by keeping me thus in constant fear of 'my life?' Let them take it. I will lay it down for you with pleasure (on paper) as far as I can recollect it. I was so young when I was born that I scarcely remember *that* circum-

* Walter Augustus Arnold, the present proprietor of the Lyceum Theatre, and second son of Samuel James Arnold, for whom it was originally erected.

stance, but I believe I made my first appearance in Old Burlington Street, Burlington Gardens, on the 27th of February, 1796, about the time the farce begins at the Haymarket, that is, shortly after one o'clock in the morning. I was received with considerable approbation by an indulgent audience, 'fit though few,' and with the help of new dresses and decorations became in due time a very respectable representative of Little Pickle in 'The Spoiled Child.' My parents were first-cousins and French refugees. I had scarcely got over the measles before I was attacked by a violent 'cacoëthes scribendi,' and at the age of ten had perpetrated several 'Odes,' 'Sonnets,' &c. An 'Address to the Spanish Patriots' particularly was, as well as I can remember, really terrible to listen to. In the meantime the education I had received from a kind and accomplished mother, whom I unfortunately lost before I was nine years old, was *im*perfected at a boarding school, where I was *un*taught the French I spoke fluently as a child, and made to resemble Shakespeare in the solitary particular of 'knowing little Latin and less Greek.' Before I was fourteen I worried myself home, and the important question was propounded of what was to be done with me. I had a playmate in an attorney's office, and therefore wished to be a lawyer. I was fond of drawing, and

therefore desired to be an artist. I liked cricket, too, uncommonly, and was no mean batter or bowler; but it did not appear that I could get a living as a long-stop or make a fortune in a few innings; and my father, who had known what it was to be almost a beggar in a foreign country, and to attain a competency by his own industry and honesty, determined I should have a trade or profession at my back. He had made himself a watchmaker, but he couldn't make me one. Ultimately I declared for the pencil, and was sent to study geometry and perspective under a Monsieur de Court, a French landscape-painter of some ability. He died before I could discover the quadrature of the circle, and his death was the vanishing point of my line in perspective. This disappointment brought on an attack of my old complaint of scribbling, and in the hope of one day publishing my own works, I suddenly determined to be a bookseller. To a bookseller accordingly I was articled, and during the few years I passed with him my theatrical propensities began to develop themselves. I had spoken Rolla's speech to his soldiers shortly after I had found my own, and had been bribed to take some nasty stuff, when an urchin, on one occasion by the present of a complete harlequin's suit, mask, wand, and all, and on another by that of a miniature theatre and strong com-

pany of pasteboard actors, in whose control I enjoyed all the roses without any of the thorns of theatrical management. I now turned amateur actor myself. At the theatres Private, Berwick Street, Pancras Street, Catherine Street, and Wilton Street, alternately, I murdered many principal personages of the acting drama, in company with several accomplices who have since risen to deserved distinction upon the public boards; and it is most probable by this time I should have been a very bad actor had not 'the sisters three and such odd branches of learning' occasioned me by the merest accident to become an indifferent dramatist. Finding nothing in Shakespeare and Sheridan worthy my abilities, I determined on writing a play myself, and acting, of course, the principal part in it. The offspring of this thought was the burlesque entitled 'Amoroso, King of Little Britain,' which being completed and handed round amongst my brother amateurs, was by one of them shown to Mr. Harley, of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. That establishment happened to be at the moment in a state of absolute starvation—the only cause I can imagine of its suddenly snapping at so humble a morsel. Snap at it, however, it did, and the excellent acting and singing of Mr. Harley, Mr. Knight, Mr. Oxberry, Mr. G. Smith, Mrs. Orger, and Mrs. Bland

secured for it a popularity it could never otherwise have enjoyed. This to me most unexpected event (I knew nothing of its being in the theatre before I saw it announced in the bills for performance) occurred on the 21st of April, 1818, and at once determined my future. Encouraged by my kind friend Mr. Harley, and subsequently by Mr. Elliston and Mr. Stephen Kemble, I commenced to be a dramatist in earnest, and at this present date have put upon the stage, of one description and another, seventy-six pieces."

Since the period at which the above was penned (February, 1833), I have added nearly a hundred to that number, and am now at the age of seventy-five once more called upon to "give an account of myself;" not, I am perfectly conscious, with the idea that any interest would be taken by the general public in my own "sayings and doings," but that having lived in London society upwards of half a century, it has been thought I may have something to tell it of many of my contemporaries who have been its greatest ornaments, instructors, and entertainers. I enter upon this task with considerable diffidence, for the memory upon which I have to depend recalls a countless number of autobiographies, memoirs, and reminiscences, all in possession of very nearly the same ground over

which I must inevitably travel * — portraits more powerfully painted, scenes more graphically described, and, worst of all, the best stories anticipated. In many instances I shall feel that mine is "a tale twice told, and in the second hearing troublesome." It is this special consideration which has constantly deterred me hitherto from acting on the suggestions of numerous friends that I should give to the world a more detailed account of my experiences at home and abroad than is contained in the brief memoirs to be found appended to some of my dramas, the biographical notice in "Men of the Time," and one or two other publications. I have at length, however, taken heart of grace, sundry considerations thereunto me moving, one of which was, that having for some time survived the threescore years and ten allotted to man by Scriptural authority, and having never kept a journal or even a note-book, it was extremely uncertain how long memory might "hold a seat in this distracted brain," and highly probable that "my life" might come to an endbefore I began it.

Turning over some old papers, in search of any

* At the present moment a large addition has been made to this class of publications, and nearly all concerning my personal friends and acquaintances; notably the Rev. Francis Barham, Charles Young, Crabb Robinson, Kean, the Kembles, and the Rev. W. Harness; and "the cry is still they come."

material that would assist my recollection or illustrate my narrative, I lighted upon a rough and almost illegible draft of the above letter, and thought, as it contained the principal facts concerning myself up to the time I came of age, and began seriously the battle of life, it would put me so far on my journey without any more trouble. Two or three points in it, however, recal circumstances, anecdotes, and personages which will, I trust, excuse my "harking back" to them. In the first place, respecting my parents. I stated in that letter that they were French refugees. I should have said, more correctly, that they were the children of French refugees, both of them having been born in London. Who were "the real old original" emigrants of my family at the period of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), I have as yet been unable to discover. All I have ascertained is that three brothers, Paul, Antoine, and Pierre-Antoine, were living in London during the first half of the last century, and married here—Paul in 1723, Anthony in 1758, and Peter Anthony in 1770. It is, therefore, possible that they also may have been born in England; but I took no interest in such matters during the lifetime of those who could have informed me, and have only a dreamy recollection of a family tradition that somebody, at the time of the persecution of the

Protestants, escaped from France in a tub, which may probably be nothing more than a *tale* of one. However, I am in the proud position of being able to prove that I had a grandfather, my father being the fifth and youngest son of the said Paul Planché, by Marie Anne Fournier, his first wife. He was born in 1734, baptised at the French Protestant Chapel, Leicester Fields, and received the name of Jacques from a godfather who rejoiced in the magnificent appellation of Jacques de Guyon de Pampelune, as I have recently discovered from the registers of that chapel preserved at Somerset House; but who or what that illustrious foreigner may have been I am woefully ignorant. My principal reason for mentioning the exact date of my father's baptism is to record a fact I have often heard him mention, that when twelve years old he passed over Tower Hill during the execution of the rebel Lords Kilmarnock and Balmerino, August 18, 1746.

An old gentleman, the late Mr. William Dance (father of Charles, my *collaborateur* in the "Olympic Revels" and several other pieces), to whom I mentioned the circumstance, instantly "capped" it by exclaiming, "My father built the scaffold." "The life of man is but a span," and yet how far into the past will two or three generations sometimes carry us!

My grandfather must have remembered the battle of Blenheim. My father was born before the battle of Culloden, and lived to read the accounts of the battle of Waterloo; and in the reign of William IV. I was talking to a hale and hearty octogenarian whose father was born in the reign of William III., and whose grandfather probably had seen Charles II. My grandmother did not long survive my father's birth; and he, with his brothers and sisters, were too soon made miserable by a step-mother, who, as I have often heard my father say, drove him—still a mere boy—out of the house by her cruel conduct. He made his way by some means to Geneva, where he learned the art and mystery of watchmaking, and was in Paris in 1757, where he saw Damien taken to execution for the attempt to assassinate Louis XV. One of the most tender-hearted of human beings, he had not tarried on Tower Hill to see the axe fall upon Lord Kilmarnock; I need scarcely say he did not follow the procession to witness the tearing asunder of a fellow-creature by four horses. There were no illustrated penny papers in those days to excite the morbid appetites of youth, and familiarise the boys and girls of the period with sights of horror and ruffianism, "teaching the young idea how to shoot," or stab, as may be most convenient. On his return to

England he found employment in the celebrated house of Vulliamy & Co., watchmakers to his youthful Majesty King George III., who took a great fancy to my father, and often chatted with him in the most familiar manner. One day, going to St. James's with the King's watch, which had been mended, he remarked to the page that the ribbon was rather dirty. The King heard him, and coming to the door, said, in the sharp, quick way which was habitual to him, "What's that, Planché? What's that?" My father repeated his observation, and suggested a new ribbon. "New ribbon, Planché! What for? Can't it be washed? Can't it be washed?" With what malicious glee would Peter Pindar have misrepresented this half-jocular, half-innocent, question of the simple-minded, good-natured sovereign.

I have mentioned that my father and mother were first-cousins, she being the only child of Antoine Planché, brother of Paul, by Mary, only daughter of Abraham and Catherine Thomas, both Prussians, who came over to England in the suite of Caroline, Queen of George II.; so that during the late lamentable war I have been really surprised that I have not died of spontaneous combustion, and can only attribute my escape from at least serious intestine commotion to the letters of naturalisation prudently taken out by my

ancestors, by virtue of which they became British subjects, and consequently imparted to the blood of their descendant that benevolent neutrality which has, I trust, secured to us the eternal gratitude of both the belligerents.

I have a misty sort of notion that Mr. (I suppose I should say Herr) Thomas was tutor or German master to Charles, fourth Duke of Rutland, and was with him in Ireland during his grace's viceroyalty; but, be that as it may, I know the Duchess (the Beautiful Isabella, as she was called) was warmly attached to his daughter (my grandmother, Mary Planché), and was most kind to my mother and me. I was frequently taken to see her in Sackville Street, Piccadilly (the house is now "Draper's Hotel"), and remember riding round the drawing-room on the late Duke's gold-headed cane—at that time a fine tall young man of three- or four-and-twenty, wearing a blue tailed-coat with gilt buttons, buckskin breeches, and top-boots.

I mention this circumstance, because at that period his grace offered my mother an ensign's commission for me, I being four years old. Had she accepted it, I might have led my regiment at Waterloo, and been now perhaps a major-general and a G.C.B., with one eye and a wooden leg, supposing always that I had

not been "left alone in my glory," like Sir John Moore, on the ramparts of Corunna, or prudently retired upon half-pay as soon as I arrived at years of discretion. Perhaps this latter alternative did not occur to her. Oh happy days of England, when babies were really born with gold spoons in their mouths, and could be made colonels of regiments, commissioners of excise, or masters of the Mint, in their cradles, and without competitive examination! The great-grandfather of a friend of mine affords a remarkable example of this precocity of preferment. The lady of a cabinet minister (I purposely suppress names) had promised to stand godmother to the infant, and calling on his parents a day or two previous to the ceremony, expressed her regret that Lord —— had nothing left at his disposal of any importance; and that the only thing he could do for her godson was to put his name on the pension-list as a superannuated general postman. The offer was accepted. The pension was regularly paid to the parents during the minority of their son, and to him afterwards as long as he lived. He thrived in the world, became an alderman of Chichester, and attained a considerable age, often declaring that he had more pleasure in pocketing the few pounds he drew half-yearly from this source than he derived from the receipt of any other portion

of his income. He died a few days after one payment was due, and one of his executors came to town to receive the money and announce his decease. On asking the clerk who paid him if it were necessary to produce a certificate of the death, he was answered, "Oh no, not in the least—I will take your word for it. My father paid this pension as long as he lived, and I have paid it myself for the last thirty years. I'm quite sure Mr. —— must be dead by this time." He had been a superannuated general postman for upwards of eighty years! His descendant is now a baronet and a member of parliament; and I had the story from his father at his own dinner-table.

It must have been about the year 1800 that I had an interview with an illustrious personage whose title has a weird and ghostly sound in these days—the Stadtholder of Holland. My mother, whose health had begun to decline, was on a visit to some friends who had apartments in Hampton Court Palace, at that time the residence of his Serene Highness William V., Prince of Orange, Hereditary Stadtholder, who had taken refuge in England on the advance of the French under Pichegru in 1794. I was playing in the gardens with my nurse; and, being restricted by her from doing something or other which I desired to do—most likely because it was wrong—began to kick and stamp

and howl after the fashion of naughty children in general. His Serenity, who was returning from a walk, kindly stopped to ask what had disturbed *my* serenity; but as the subject of our conference was emphatically domestic, and its results had no influence on the important political events then convulsing the Continent, I should not think it necessary to repeat what passed, even if I remembered it, which I don't; nor should I have mentioned the circumstance at all could I have resisted the temptation of recording that I have actually seen and spoken with a Stadtholder. Fancy a naturalist old enough and fortunate enough to have seen a live dodo! Dining recently with an old friend and schoolfellow, the conversation turned upon the ages of the persons present, and each was asked what was the earliest public event he could remember. My answer was, "The general illumination for the peace of Amiens." "The peace of Amiens? Why, that was in 1801!" exclaimed a learned judge who sat near to me. "Exactly; but I remember it perfectly." He turned to his next neighbour, and, in an audible whisper, said, "The Wandering Jew!" In support of my assertion I then related the following circumstance. Monsieur Otto, the French Minister, resided, at that time, in Portman Square, and my father having moved from Old Burlington Street into Park Street, Grosvenor

Square, took me to see the illumination at the French Embassy, which was exceedingly magnificent. The house was one blaze of coloured lamps from parlour to parapet. Green olive-branches with red berries—not natural, but effective—and other pacific emblems surrounded the windows; and above those of the drawing-room, occupying the whole breadth of the building, glittered in golden-coloured lamps the word "Concorde." Though as nearly English as a French word could well be, it was misinterpreted by a number of sailors in the crowd, who began shouting, "We are not conquered! Pull it down!" The mob, always ripe for a row, took up the cry, and was proceeding from uproar to violence, when some one announced from the doorsteps that the obnoxious word should be altered; and a host of lamplighters were speedily seen busily employed in removing and substituting for it "Amitié." Unfortunately this was also misunderstood by the ignorant masses for "Enmity," and the storm again raged with redoubled fury. Ultimately was done what should have been done at first. The word "Peace" was displayed, and peace was restored to Portman Square for the rest of the evening. The peace itself was of not much longer duration.* What

* The preliminaries of Peace were signed in London, December, 1801: but Peace was not proclaimed until Thursday, 29th April, 1802,

a different thing was a general illumination in those days to one at the present time! True, there was no gas, nor so much picturesque effect as modern art has, by the means of cut glass, produced in such decorations as have delighted the public at Poole's; but, on the other hand, the former illuminations were really general. Not a window in the smallest court or blindest alley but had its candle stuck in a lump of clay, while in houses of more pretension one blazed in every pane. Rows of flambeaux fastened to the area railings flared in every direction, and long lines of variegated lamps bordered every balcony, or, arranged in graceful festoons, valanced each verandah. There was not a dark street to be found in London. Mobs paraded the metropolis, from Hyde Park Corner to Whitechapel, with shouts of "Light up! Light up!" and smashed every window that did not swiftly display a humble dip in obedience to the summons. Since the rejoicings for the crowning victory of Waterloo, nothing like a general illumination has been seen in London.

My poor mother's health breaking down completely, and incapacitating her from further superintendence of my education,* I was placed, at the age of eight, in a boarding-school kept by a Rev. Mr. Farrer in Lawrence

and it must have been on that evening the above circumstance took place.

* She died August 11, 1804.

Street, Chelsea. In the room in which I slept were two boys, both as handsome as they were clever. They amused themselves with writing plays, and enacting the principal parts in them, displaying considerable histrionic ability. My early developed theatrical proclivities naturally rivetted the bonds of friendship which were speedily formed between us. The youngest was about my own age. He had glossy black hair, curling gracefully over his head, and a pair of piercing dark eyes that sparkled with humour and intelligence. They left school before me. The eldest I never saw again; he went to America, and died there; but my especial friend rose to high distinction at the Bar, and having filled the important offices of Solicitor and Attorney-General, is, at the present moment, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer. It was at his table the conversation took place I have just related, and my interlocutor was Baron Bramwell.

I think I may as well take this opportunity of disposing in a few words of the rest of my paternal ancestors. Pierre Antoine, the youngest of my father's uncles, appears from Rivington's "Complete Guide," a sort of London Directory published in 1763, to have been at that date an East India merchant, residing in Rood Lane, Fenchurch Street. He was admitted to the freedom of the Levant Company in

1775, and died at Compiègne, in France, in 1797, leaving by his wife, Sarah Douglas, an only son, John Douglas Planché, Captain in the 60th Regiment of Foot, who died in command of his company at Dominica, in the West Indies, Oct. 3rd, 1812. He married a Miss Brown, of Jamaica, and left an only son, named James after my father, who settled somewhere in America, and remained ever afterwards a very *distant* relation.

My father had four brothers, only one of whom lived to man's estate; and there is, I find, some general interest attached to him, of which I was entirely ignorant till the other day, when I received the following information from Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt, F.S.A., of Winster Hall, Matlock, the well-known Derbyshire antiquary, and editor of the Quarterly Archæological Journal and Review, entitled "The Reliquary," his attention having been called to the subject by the first chapter of my "Recollections," in the April number of "London Society." "There has always been a tradition that the first maker of China (porcelain) in Derby, was a Frenchman, who lived in a small house in Lodge Lane, who modelled and made small articles in China, principally animals—birds, cats, dogs, lambs, &c., which he fired in a pipe-maker's oven in the neighbourhood, belonging to a man named Woodward; and I tried very hard to

find out who the French refugee was, and I am happy to say that I am able to show, as I told you, that he was no other than Andrew Planché. You will find with this letter, a copy of a draft of an agreement (the original is in my own possession), in which he enters into partnership with Wm. Duesbury and John Heath, for the making of China in Derby. So he was *the first China-maker in Derby.* I have some of the small birds made (I think there can be no doubt) by him; but, curiously, his name never appears again in connection with the works. . . . He was evidently a very *clever* man in China-making, and I firmly believe he had the secret of China body,* Duesbury the energy and other requirements, and Heath the money, to start and carry out the famous Derby China Works. . . . As I am very anxious to give Andrew Planché his full and proper place in the history of China (ware), I shall be quite thankful for any genealogical notes you can give me."

This letter was accompanied by a copy of the draft of agreement, as promised, and extracts from the parish register at Derby of the baptisms of *Paul*, *James*, and William, sons of Andrew Planché and Sarah his wife, the names of the two former being strongly indicative of the identity of the China-maker

* *I. e.*, the materials requisite for the composition of fine porcelain.

with my uncle Andrew, who was born the 14th and baptised the 24th of March, $172\frac{7}{8}$, and would, therefore, at the date of the agreement, January 1, 1756, have nearly completed the 28th year of his age. He was living at Bath in 1804, and died there a few years subsequently. The draft is headed "Articles of Agreement between John Heath, of Derby, in the county of Derby, gentleman, Andrew Planché, of the same place, China-maker, and W^m^ Duesbury, of Langton, in the county of Stafford, enameller," and records that "y^e^ said John Heath hath y^e^ day of y^e^ date of these presents delivered in as a stock y^e^ sum of one thousand pounds, to be made and employed between them for y^e^ carrying on y^e^ said art of making China wares." I trust, with Mr. Jewitt, that in the history of Ceramic art in England, the name of Andrew Planché will henceforth be duly recorded.

CHAPTER II.

WERE it my object to spin out these pages by enumerating every thing that I have seen since I could see anything, it would be easy for me to do so. I need only copy the facts out of "Haydn's Dictionary of Dates," or some similar useful compilation. Also, if I could suppose the public desirous to become acquainted with every little circumstance connected with me and my family, I should be most happy to enter into the minutest details I could remember; for though not aware that I have anything particular to boast of, I thank God I know nothing I need be ashamed of. I have, however, too much self-respect to adopt the former course, and too little vanity to be seduced into the latter. Of course, as a resident in London, I remember the destruction by fire of both the great national theatres; the O. P. Row at New Covent Garden; the young Roscius mania; the retirement of John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons; the advent of Edmund Kean and Miss O'Niel; and many other less

important theatrical occurrences, which have been recently so fully and graphically described by Dr. Doran, in his interesting work "Their Majesties' Servants," and Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, in his "Lives of the Kembles,"—volumes which leave nothing to be desired as regards the Ultimus Romanorum of the English stage and his magnificent sister.

As to political events, I saw Sir Francis Burdett taken to the Tower from his house in Piccadilly, 6th of April, 1810, and artillerymen standing with lighted matches by the side of their loaded field-pieces in Berkley Square, and blood running in the kennels in Burlington Street, into which men and women were dipping sticks and handkerchiefs in front of the residence of Mr. Robinson (afterwards Lord Goderich) during the Corn Law Riots in 1815; but beyond the main facts, which are matters of history, I have no incident to mention, no anecdote to relate, which would add to their illustration. I may briefly state that I saw Mrs. Jordan act in "The Country Girl," and George Frederick Cooke play Iago to Pope's Othello, at Drury Lane; John Kemble, in Macbeth, Brutus, and King Lear; and Mrs. Siddons, in Lady Macbeth, at Covent Garden; but it would be impertinence in me to express my opinion of performances I was much too young to appreciate. I can remember, however, being greatly

impressed by two effects; one, the wonderful expression of Kemble's face in his interview with Lady Macbeth after the murder of Duncan, act iii. scene 2. I can see him now, standing in the door-way in the centre of the scene. The kingly crown appeared a burthen and a torture to him. How terribly clear it was, before he uttered a word, that his mind was "full of scorpions"—that he acutely felt—

——"Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstacy."

The other was the exulting exclamation of Mrs. Siddons, when, as Lady Macbeth, having read the letter, she greets her husband on his entrance with—

"Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the 'all-hail' *hereafter!*"

The effect was electrical. Her whole performance, indeed, impressed me with an awe that, when I met her in society, several years afterwards, I could not entirely divest myself of on being presented to her.

Mrs. Powell (then Mrs. Renaud), a beautiful woman, and a good actress of the old school, succeeded Mrs. Siddons in many of her characters. She was anxious to conceal her second marriage, not from any unworthy

motive, but for private family reasons. An actress in the Covent Garden Company, who bore by courtesy the name of one of the performers, and had become acquainted with the fact, maliciously addressed her one night in the green-room, before a numerous assemblage of actors and visitors, thus:—"Mrs. Powell, everybody says you are married." "Indeed!" retorted Mrs. Renaud, coldly; "everybody says you are not."

Amongst the amateurs, with whom I became acquainted at various private theatres, and the Mnemosynean Society, in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where I was wont to recite pieces of my own composition, some of which are still popular in "Penny Readings," I must mention the celebrated John Reeve, of the Adelphi, Frank Wyman, a respectable actor of small character parts, at the Olympic, and the beautiful Miss Beaumont of Covent Garden. Once, and once only, I made my appearance in public, for the benefit of a young friend, who afterwards acquired some reputation as a tragedian, under the name of Barton, in America. It was at the Theatre Royal ——— Greenwich! I played Multiple, in the "Actor of All-Work," a duo-drama in one act, written expressly for the elder Mathews, and which had never been printed; but my memory was in those days really marvellous, and I wrote the whole piece out after one night's hearing at

the Haymarket, going a second night to correct errors, and scarcely finding a word to add or to alter. The part was one of impersonation, with rapid changes of dress and character, and at the end of the piece I gave imitations of all the principal London performers. Mrs. Faucit, afterwards Mrs. Farren, sat behind the stage-door in the proscenium—there were stage-doors in the proscenium then—to witness the audacious attempt, and flattered me at the close of it, by recommending Mr. Faucit, the manager, to offer me an engagement, which he actually did before I left the theatre. How I resisted the temptation I know not, for it was a temptation of no ordinary power. I doted on the theatre; the smell of the lamps and the orange peel was intoxicating: but it was not to be, and I am grateful for what I must consider a narrow escape from a profession wherein it is unlikely I should have attained eminence, and of which I was unequal to bear the constant toils and frequent mortifications.

In 1816 I lost my excellent father. If an honest man be the noblest work of God, he emphatically deserved that enviable title.

In 1818, as I have already stated in my prefatory letter, I perpetrated the burlesque of "Amoroso, King of Little Britain."* It was a poor imitation of "Bom-

* Produced April 21st. Mr. George Daniel, in his Remarks, appended

bastes Furioso," with which it is unworthy comparison. When I think of the many deserving authors who have toiled for years before they could obtain a trial, I feel almost ashamed of my unsought success. But consider the cast! Harley in the height of his popularity, who had but to show his teeth to set the house in a roar; "Little Knight," as he was affectionately called by the public; the unctuous Oxberry (the elder); the grotesque basso-profundo, George Smith; charming Mrs. Orger, and mellifluous Mrs. Bland! I sat in the upper boxes utterly ignorant of danger—"he jests at scars who never felt a wound,"—and screamed with the good-natured audience. If the public, however, proved indulgent, the management was just. It estimated my work at its right value as a literary production, and paid me nothing; but I had the proud satisfaction of learning from authority, that the success of "Amoroso" had prevented the premature closing of the doors of Drury Lane Theatre. Was

to Cumberland's edition of the Piece (which, by the way, was not originally called by me a burlesque, but "a serio-comic, bombastic, and operatic interlude"), says, "We have heard that the original title was 'Amoroso, King of Pimlico,' but the licenser objected to it, in consequence of the palace of a portly potentate being situate in the vicinity." I never heard of such a title, or such a prohibition. The piece was announced without my knowledge, as "The King and the Cook," to which I strongly objected, and insisted upon the restoration of my own title, "Amoroso, King of Little Britain."

there any pecuniary compensation to desire after that? An atrabilious critic, reviewing the piece in the next number of "Blackwood," wrote "Author!" But even the shoeblacks of Paris call themselves *marchands de cirage.*" Hard words to swallow, but they didn't choke me. They only determined me to try and write better. *Fas est, &c.* Besides, I was quoted by "The Times" in a leading article. "Think of that, Master Brook." A sudden resignation of ministers, or a dissolution of Parliament—I forget which, and it is not worth the trouble of ascertaining—reminded the writer of the King of Little Britain's speech to his courtiers: "My lords and gentlemen—get out!" What was the abuse of "Blackwood" to an *author* quoted by "The Times?"

Drury Lane Theatre, in 1818, was under the direction of a committee of noblemen and gentlemen, to most of whom I was of course presented; but, unfortunately, a change had just taken place, and amongst the retiring members was Lord Byron, who had already left England, never to return. I have never ceased to regret my missing, by only a few months, an introduction to that truly noble poet. I cared little about knowing the Earls of Yarmouth and Glengall, who were on the new committee; but to be personally acquainted with Kean, Munden, Dowton, the two genial

Jacks (they were never called anything else), Bannister, who, though he had left the stage, was often in the Green Room, and (Irish) Johnstone, Harley, Knight, Oxberry (the elder), Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Orger, Mrs Mardyn, and Mrs. Robinson, the two latter, perhaps, unsurpassed in beauty as the two former, also handsome women, were in talent, was to me a gratification as great as it was unexpected. I lived in the Theatre. Went home but to dine, and reluctantly to sleep. Nor were these great actors and actresses the only attraction in the evening. Some of the best writers and most celebrated wits had the *entrée* behind the scenes, and frequently availed themselves of the pleasant privilege. Two of the most constant visitors were James Smith, of "Rejected Addresses" celebrity, and Samuel Beazley, the architect and dramatist. It would be difficult to name two more amiable as well as amusing persons, and I enjoyed the friendship of both as long as they lived. Dear, good-tempered, clever, generous, eccentric, Sam Beazley! He died in Tonbridge Castle, where he resided for the few last years of his life, having a professional appointment in connection with the South Eastern Railway. Many years before, he wrote his own epitaph :

"Here lies Samuel Beazley,
Who lived hard and died easily."

Alas! the latter declaration was not prophetic. He suffered considerably a short time before his decease, and his usual spirits occasionally forsaking him, he one day wrote so melancholy a letter, that the friend to whom it was addressed, observed, in his reply, that it was "like the first chapter of Jeremiah." "You are mistaken, my dear fellow," retorted the wit; "it is the last chapter of Samuel."

Beazley never had five shillings for himself, but he could always find five pounds for a friend. Returning with him, in his carriage, from a Greenwich dinner, I casually alluded to the comfort of being independent of public conveyances. "Yes," he said; "but I'm rather a remarkable man. I have a carriage, and a cabriolet, and three horses, and a coachman and a footman, and a large house, and a cook and three maid-servants, and a mother and a sister, and—half-a-crown."

It was scarcely an exaggeration, and yet he was never known to be in debt, and left many little legacies to friends, besides providing for his widow and only daughter. He was truly "a remarkable man." The work he got through was something astounding. He appeared to take no rest. He built theatres and wrote for them with the same rapidity; had always "just arrived by the mail" in time to see the fish removed

from the table, or was going off by the early coach after the last dance at four in the morning. At dinner, or at ball, was there a lady who appeared neglected, because she was old, ill-favoured, or uninteresting, Beazley was sure to pay her the most respectful and delicate attentions. Not a breath of scandal ever escaped his lips; not an unkind word did I ever hear him utter. There were two men whom he held in horror, but he never abused them; his brow darkened if their names were mentioned, but by that, and his silence alone could you have surmised that he entertained the least feeling against them. His pleasant sayings would fill a volume. The wit was, perhaps, not particularly pungent, but it was always playful. Building a staircase for Sir Henry Meux, he called it making a new "Gradus ad Parnassum," because it was steps for the *muses*. Some very old brandy, pathetically pointed out by George Robins as having been left to him by his father, he proposed, should be called, "Spirit of my Sainted Sire!" and when the question arose of how the title of Herold's charming Opera, "Le Pré aux Clercs," should be rendered in English, he quietly suggested "Parson's Green." Beazley was essentially a gentleman, and it is, therefore, a greater gratification to me to record him as one of the first to take me by the hand in the society

to which I had been so suddenly and unexpectedly introduced.

Of my equally kind and encouraging friend, James Smith, I shall have to speak more fully hereafter, and will therefore only say that our acquaintance commenced during the rehearsal of "Amoroso," to which he paid me the great compliment of contributing a lively duet for Harley and Mrs. Orger, an obligation which I duly acknowledged in the printed book, by stating that it was "written by a gentleman of literary celebrity."

There was another *habitué* with whom I became acquainted at the same period; one of the last of that peculiar style of fop whose dress and manners were unsparingly caricatured in the print-shops, and became conventional on the stage. But with all his extravagance of attire, his various-coloured under waistcoats, his rouged cheeks, and coal-black wig, with portentous *toupée*, poor old Sir Lumley Skeffington was a perfect gentleman, a most agreeable companion, and bore "the stings and arrows of outrageous fortune" with Spartan courage and Christian resignation. Though his fair-weather friends had deserted him, no complaint or reproach ever passed his lips. But once only, during the many years we were acquainted, did I hear him allude to the misery of his position. We were the only

two guests at the dinner-table of a mutual friend, and Sir Lumley had been particularly lively and entertaining. Our host being called out of the room to speak to some one on business, I congratulated the old baronet on his excellent spirits. "Ah! my dear Mr. Planché," he replied, "it's all very well while I am in society; but I give you my honour, I should heartily rejoice if I felt certain that after leaving this house to-night I should be found dead on my own doorstep." I shall never forget the deep but quiet pathos of these sad words. I am happy to add that he lived to inherit a small property, and ended his days in peace and comfort.

CHAPTER III.

SHORTLY after the production of "Amoroso," I paid my first visit to Paris, where I witnessed, at the "Porte St. Martin," the delightful acting of Potier, in "Le Bourgmestre de Sardam," one of his most celebrated characters, with a translation of which I returned to London, and, as in duty bound, presented it to Drury Lane; but a version of the piece being at the same moment announced for immediate representation at Covent Garden, it was not thought advisable to be second in the field, and mine, entitled "The Czar, or a Day in the Dockyards," was therefore returned to me.* The acting manager of Drury Lane at that period was Mr. Stephen Kemble, brother of John and Charles, and Mrs. Siddons. His obesity was so great that he played Falstaff without stuffing. I saw him do it on one occasion; but the effect was more painful than amusing. He evidently suffered under the exer-

* It was subsequently produced at Sadler's Wells, June 21, 1819.

tion; and though his reading of the part was irreproachable, he lacked the natural humour, and was too ill at ease to pourtray the mere animal spirits of the jovial knight. But did any one ever see Sir John Falstaff except in his mind's eye? Dowton was, in my opinion, the best representative in my time. His eye had the right rogueish twinkle; his laugh, the fat, self-satisfied chuckle; his large protruding under lip, the true character of sensuality; but his memory was notoriously treacherous, and the text suffered severely. He used to say to an author, "D—n your dialogue! give me the situations." As Ducrow, in more recent days, was wont to exclaim, "Cut out the *dialect*, and come to the 'osses!" But Shakespeare cannot be so cavalierly treated with impunity.

The first green-room—for there was a second in those days, for the ballet and chorus, besides a room for "the supers"—the first green-room of either of the great Theatres Royal at the time of my introduction to them, was certainly one of the most delightful resorts in London, combining the elegance and courtesy of fashionable life with all the wit, mirth, and "admirable fooling" to be found in literary, theatrical, and artistic circles. Presided over by men of liberal education, accustomed to the highest society, however great the fun, it never degenerated into coarseness nor passed

the bounds of good breeding. No visitor was allowed to enter who was not in full evening dress. Even the actors were excluded if in boots, unless when attired in their stage habiliments. The principal ladies had each her page waiting in the corridor to pick up her train as she issued from the green-room, and bear it to the wing or other point of her entrance on the stage. "Nous avons changé tout cela." Whether for the better or not, I leave it to others to say.

Elliston had become proprietor of the Olympic Pavilion, as it was then called, in Wych Street, built originally by old Astley for equestrian performances. At his suggestion I wrote a speaking harlequinade, with songs for the columbine, the subject being "Little Red Riding Hood." On the first night of its representation (December 21, 1818) every trick failed, not a scene could be induced to close or to open properly, and the curtain fell at length amidst a storm of disapprobation. I was with Mr. Elliston and his family in a private box. He sent round an order to the prompter that not one of the carpenters, scene-shifters, or property-men were to leave the theatre till he had spoken to them. As soon as the house was cleared, the curtain was raised, and all the culprits assembled on the stage in front of one of the scenes in the piece representing the interior of a cottage, having a door in one half and a latticed window

in the other. Elliston led me forward, and standing in the centre, with his back to the foot-lights, harangued them in the most grandiloquent language—expatiated on the enormity of their offence, their ingratitude to the man whose bread they were eating, the disgrace they had brought upon the theatre, the cruel injury they had inflicted on the young and promising author by his side; then pointing in the most tragical attitude to his wife and daughters, who remained in the box, bade them look upon the family they had ruined, and burying his face in his handkerchief to stifle his sobs, passed slowly through the door in the scene, leaving his auditors silent, abashed, and somewhat affected, yet rather relieved by being let off with a lecture. The next minute the casement in the other flat was thrown violently open, and thrusting in his head, his face scarlet with fury, he roared out, "I discharge you all!" I feel my utter incapacity to convey an idea of this ludicrous scene, and I question whether any one unacquainted with the man, his voice, action, and wonderful facial expression, could thoroughly realize the glorious absurdity of it from verbal description. With Elliston I was extremely intimate for several years, and had great respect for his amiable wife and charming daughters; but our mutual friend, the late George Raymond, has written so exhaustive a life

of this "Napoleon of the Drama"—so thoroughly described the man, and so industriously collected every scrap of information concerning him, every anecdote connected with him—that there is only one little incident that I do not find he has mentioned, at least in the edition I possess, and it is so characteristic, that it deserves recording. Within a few hours of his death he objected to take some medicine, and, in order to induce him to do so, he was told he should have some brandy and water afterwards. A faint smile stole over his face, the old rogueish light gleamed for a moment in his glazing eye, as he murmured, "Bribery and *corruption*." They were almost the last intelligible words he uttered. Elliston was one of the best general actors I have ever seen; but the parts in which he has remained unrivalled to this day were the gentlemanly rakes and agreeable rattles in high comedy. His Ranger, Archer, Marlow, Doricourt, Charles Surface, Rover, Tangent, and many other such characters, he made his own—and no wonder, for these characters reflected his own.

During 1819 I produced several dramas of various descriptions at sundry theatres, amongst which I may mention an Easter piece at Drury Lane, founded on one of the Tales of the Genii, and called "Abudah, or the Talisman of Oromanes." The ballads sung in it

were set by that extraordinary character, Michael Kelly, cruelly described as "Composer of Wines and Importer of Music," and were I should think his latest productions in the latter capacity. During one of the rehearsals a young lady, whose name I will not try to remember, sang wofully out of tune; a shriek of agony, followed by a volley of oaths and objurgations, startled the whole dramatis personæ, as the utterer was invisible. Kelly, who was a cripple from the effects of gout, had, unknown to any one, hobbled into the house, and taken his seat in a pit-box behind the cloth with which it was covered in the day-time. The piece was a very poor one, miserably put on the stage, and, despite the loyal endeavours of Harley, and the sweet warbling of Mrs. Bland, scarcely survived the Easter holidays. At that time, however, a run of nine nights was considered a success. It would now, and with reason, be accounted a lamentable failure.

It was shortly after this, I think, that Mrs. Charles Kemble, meeting Harley one day in Bow Street, exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Harley, how much we wish you were at Covent Garden." Harley made his most profound bow, in acknowledgment of the compliment; but the lady unfortunately added, "to play a bad part in an Easter piece."

"There is a sort of compliment," wrote Jerrold, in

one of his comedies, "which comes upon a man like a cannon-ball," and certainly this might be considered an example. Nevertheless, it *was* a very high compliment, for it showed a just appreciation of the invaluable services of so honest an actor as John Harley, who never neglected to do his utmost with every part he undertook, however unworthy of his abilities. The many poor dramas that he contributed to "pull through," by his tact, humour, liveliness, and personal popularity, would fill pages, if enumerated.

There was great comic talent at Covent Garden, but the want of a Harley had, no doubt, often been felt in "a bad Easter piece," and Mrs. Charles Kemble, with that amusing *naïveté* which was one of her greatest charms, expressed that feeling, without the least intention to disparage the general ability of a conscientious artist and deservedly favourite comedian.

A more fortunate melodrama of mine, "The Vampire, or the Bride of the Isles," was produced at the Lyceum, or English Opera House, as it was then called, August 9, 1820. Mr. Samuel James Arnold, the proprietor and manager, had placed in my hands, for adaptation, a French melodrama, entitled "Le Vampire," the scene of which was laid, with the usual recklessness of French dramatists, in Scotland, where the superstition never existed. I vainly endeavoured

to induce Mr. Arnold to let me change it to some place in the east of Europe. He had set his heart on Scotch music and dresses—the latter, by the way, were in stock—laughed at my scruples, assured me that the public would neither know nor care—and in those days they certainly did not—and therefore there was nothing left for me but to do my best with it. The result was most satisfactory to the management. The situations were novel and effective; the music lively and popular; the cast strong, comprising T. P. Cooke, who made a great hit in the principal character, Harley, Bartley, Pearman, Mrs. Chatterley, and Miss Love. The trap now so well known as "the Vampire trap" was invented for this piece, and the final disappearance of the Vampire caused quite a sensation. The melodrama had a long run, was often revived, and is to this day a stock piece in the country. I had an opportunity many years afterwards, however, to treat the same subject in a manner much more satisfactory to myself, and, as it happened, in the same theatre, under the same management; but of that anon.

At this theatre I became acquainted with "Dicky Peake," the well-known humorist and dramatic writer, who was the treasurer, Mr. John Taylor of the "Sun," a notoriety of that day, Dr. Kitchener, Charles Mathews the elder, and various other visitors to the green-room

—noble, literary, and artistic. I have spoken of Peake as "a humorist," for I know no epithet that would so accurately describe him. He was not a wit in the true sense of the word. There is not a scintilla of wit that I can remember in any of his dramas or in his conversation; but there was some good fun in a few of his farces, and he had a happy knack of "fitting" his actors, a memorable example of which is Geoffrey Muffincap, the charity schoolboy, in "Amateurs and Actors," which was expressly written to suit the peculiarities of person, voice, and manner of Wilkinson. Peake's humour consisted in a grotesque combination of ideas, such as the following—Calling with him one summer day on a mutual friend, the fire-place in the drawing-room was *ornamented* with a mass of long slips of white paper falling over the bright bars of the stove. Peake's first question was, "What do you keep your macaroni in the grate for?" At a party at Beazley's, his black servant entered to make up the fire. Peake whispered to me, "Beazley's nigger has been scratching his head, and got a scuttle of coals out." I could fill a page or two with such *concetti*, which, spurted out in his peculiar manner, were perhaps more comical to hear than to repeat. His farces were usually damned the first night, and recovered themselves wonderfully afterwards. A striking instance

of this was "A Hundred-Pound Note," at Covent Garden, in which the conundrums, bandied between Power and Keeley, were violently hissed on the first representation, and received with roars of laughter subsequently. Indeed they may be said to have popularized, if not originated, the "why and because" style of jesting, which forms a principal feature in our comic journals and Christy Minstrel entertainments. His failures I consider were attributable to a strange misapprehension of the principles of dramatic composition. Any absurdity which had made *him* laugh he assumed must necessarily produce a similar effect on a general audience; a most fatal mistake for any one to fall into who caters for that "many-headed monster," the public. Poor Dicky's misfortunes rarely came alone. He was wont to pace Waterloo Bridge during the performance of a new piece, and on returning to the theatre received, with the account of its failure, the tidings on more than one occasion that his wife had presented him with twins. His extreme good temper and obliging nature made him a universal favourite. He was devotedly attached to Mr. Arnold, whose bond for 200*l.*, in acknowledgment of his long and faithful service, he generously thrust into the breakfast-room fire before him, the morning after the burning down of the Lyceum Theatre (February 16th, 1830), saying,

"You have lost all by fire, let this go too." Richard Brinsley Peake died a poor man—a singular circumstance considering that he had been for so many years the treasurer of a theatre.

In the course of the winter season 1820-21 I wrote ten pieces for the Adelphi, one of them being an adaptation of Sir Walter Scott's novel of Kenilworth, in which I ventured to retain the catastrophe as described by the author, without any alteration. Amy Robsart fell—of course not the actress (Mrs. Waylett) herself—though the business was so cleverly managed that the audience thought so, and the curtain descended to thunders of applause. This was fifty years ago, remember, and a most hazardous experiment. There has been much controversy respecting similar incidents since then, which I shall have occasion to notice hereafter, and have therefore recorded this, I believe, the first on the English stage.

In April, 1821, I took unto myself a wife, and paid with her a second visit to Paris, where we were present at the fêtes in honour of the Duke de Bordeaux, now Count de Chambord or Henri V., as political opinion may dictate. The Comtesse de Gonteau was his nurse, and as my wife's mother had kept that noble lady from starving when an exile in England, Mrs. Planché innocently imagined that a note revealing her maiden name

would immediately procure her a peep at the baby, as the Countess had protested when they parted that she could never repay the obligations she was under to all the family. I am bound to say she never did.

It was on this occasion I saw, at the Porte St. Martin, the inimitable Potier in the "Comédie Féerie," by MM. Saurin and Brazier, entitled, "Riquet à la Houppe," which was then in its first run, having been produced about two months previously. I brought it with me to England, and fifteen years afterwards it formed the foundation of the first of those fairy extravaganzas which for so long a period enjoyed without one breakdown an almost unprecedented popularity. On our return to London I entered into an engagement with Messrs. Jones and Rodwell, the then proprietors of the Adelphi, to write only for that theatre, but cancelled it after a few months, sooner than soil the stage with the production of "Tom and Jerry." A newly married man, the engagement was of consequence to me; but I can safely say that I never suffered pecuniary considerations to influence my conduct when the higher interests of the drama appeared to me at stake. Moncrief was not so fastidious. The piece was wofully dull and was ill received on its first representation; but the fun and spirit gradually introduced into it by Wrench, John Reeve, Keeley, and Wilkinson

kept it on its legs, till by degrees the town took to it, and the proprietors netted a small fortune. The following year I was introduced by a mutual friend to Mr. Charles Kemble, who had just succeeded to the management of Covent Garden on the retirement of Mr. Henry Harris, and to that theatre I voluntarily attached myself for six seasons.

The company at Drury Lane, now under the management of Elliston, who had become the lessee, at the enormous rent of £10,200 per annum, had received important accessions in the persons of Charles Young, Macready, Liston, and Miss Stephens. Still that at Covent Garden was strong in comedy, and superior in spectacular entertainments. Generally speaking, too, its members were, with the exception of the four great seceders, "tant soit peu" higher in social status, more refined in manners, more intellectual in conversation. It was "jolly" enough to dine with Kean at the "Black Jack" Tavern, or sup with him and a few more "choice spirits" at Offleys; but the retrospection was more gratifying after a quiet little family dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kemble or an admirably cooked mutton chop with Duruset at his lodgings in Jermyn Street, where the guests were worthy of the wine, and neither head nor heart worse for it next morning.

On the 3rd of December, 1822, was produced my first opera, "Maid Marian," the music by Bishop, the subject taken from a sparkling little tale of that name written by Mr. Peacock, of the India House, author of "Headlong Hall" and two or three other similar "novelettes," published by Hookham, in Bond Street. To Mr. Hookham, as in duty bound, I offered the refusal of the libretto of my opera, which, be it observed, contained much original lyrical and other matter, besides two or three situations from Ivanhoe, a kindred subject, Mr. Peacock's story being too slight to form the entire framework of a three-act opera. This offer Mr. Hookham declined in terms it would be flattering to call courteous, and all but threatened to prevent the performance of the opera as an infringement of his copyright. Its great success afforded me the handsome revenge of putting a lump of money in his pocket by the sale not only of the novel of "Maid Marian," but of all the other works by the same author, of which a second edition was speedily demanded, and the great gratification of making the public acquainted with the works of one of the most agreeable of writers which, like too many gems "of purest ray serene," had remained for years unknown, and consequently unappreciated.

And here I am desirous of making a few observa-

tions on a much contested subject. One of the many respecting which my favourite philosopher, Sir Roger de Coverley, remarks, "much may be said on both sides," viz., the adaptation of novels or romances in prose or in verse to the stage. If we refer to usage, no one can deny that it has been the practice of the greatest dramatists in every age and every country to found their plays upon the popular tales of their own or of former times, and provided the fact was "handsomely acknowledged," like the offence described by Sir Lucius O'Trigger, it "became an obligation." I question if any author felt otherwise than flattered by the proceeding. I know that Mr. Charles Kemble, when he placed "Maid Marian" in my hands, never entertained an idea of any objection being made by its writer; nor was there; for, in consequence of Mr. Hookham's behaviour, I called on Mr. Peacock at the India House, and was most cordially received by him. The objection was solely that of the short-sighted publisher, who could not perceive how greatly the value of his property would be increased till the gold began to jingle in his own pocket, some of it, I trust, finding its way into that of the amiable author. The great mass of writers of fiction are not dramatists, and if they desire, as to my knowledge they nearly all do, to see their works transferred to the stage, they must be

indebted to the playwrights. After the success of "Maid Marian," I had piles of novels sent me by not only authors but by their publishers, requesting my acceptance of them for that purpose. They knew it was the finest advertisement for a book in the world; and I have been even offered money by some to obtain for them that advantage. The author was especially on the safe side; for if the adaptation was good, and the piece successful, he had the chief glory, and a brisk sale for his book; while if it failed the dramatist was the sufferer in purse as well as reputation. How few writers combine the diametrically opposite qualifications required for success on the stage and popularity in the circulating library! The hackneyed quotation "Poeta nascitur, non fit," is equally applicable to the playwright, and it is remarkable that the greater the novelist the less able has he proved himself to fulfil the requirements and exigences of the theatre. The talent of the novelist is displayed in elaboration; that of the dramatist is condensation. The former may waft his reader from "Indus to the Pole" at his pleasure; occupy pages with the description of a country-house or the character of its proprietor; dedicate a chapter to the development of his plot. Not so the modern playwright; he can no longer, as in the early days of the English drama, shift the scene from country to

country, or direct the performer who has just made his exit in one to walk on the next minute in the other, without the fall of an act-drop, and an intimation of the time supposed to have elapsed in the playbill; and at no time dared he ever to exceed a certain limit in his dialogue, or substitute lengthy narrative for action. Walter Scott was devoted to the theatre, but quite incapable of dramatising his very dramatic novels and romances, and gladly contributed his valuable aid to his friend Terry in their adaptation as operas, by writing for him many charming characteristic lyrics. Dickens tried "his 'prentice hand," and never repeated the experiment. Thackeray sadly disappointed the manager to whom he had promised a comedy, and which, when presented, was pronounced unactable.

Mrs. Charles Gore and Lord Lytton are the only examples, so far as I can recollect, of novelists who have obtained any success on the stage; and it is worthy of remark that they have never attempted to dramatise their own most popular novels; but sought in history or the French drama for plots better suited to the purpose. Mr. Wilkie Collins appears likely to add his name as a third; but these are quite the exceptions that prove the rule, and I am aware of none other; for Mr. Charles Reed was a dramatist before he was a

novelist, having written for the stage at the commencement of his literary career, in conjunction with a master of his art, Tom Taylor. He cannot, therefore, be included in the category. On the other hand, I should be the last to dispute the right of the novelist to the full benefit of his own property, or think he should not be "courteously entreated" previous to any meddling with it. He may have contemplated attempting to dramatise it himself, or be desirous to entrust another with the task, or have strong objections to its being dramatised at all, as Dickens had to the adaptation of his Pickwick Papers; and no one with a grain of delicacy would disregard such objections. I simply contend that, except in special cases such as above mentioned, the complaint of injury to the interest of the novelist which has been recently so loudly expressed is utterly without foundation. And in any case who is the greatest criminal? The adapter, who violates the rights of property and the courtesies of society, or the manager who rewards him for the act, even if he have not, as is the case in nine instances out of ten, suggested and tempted him to commit it? Surely if the receiver be worse than the thief, the encourager of literary larceny is more blameable than the perpetrator. Were there not ready markets for stolen goods, depredation would

speedily cease to be a trade worth following. Were there no theatres at which such pieces were acceptable, the least scrupulous dramatist would soon find honesty the best policy.

CHAPTER IV.

In 1823, a casual conversation with Mr. Kemble respecting the play of "King John," which he was about to revive for Young, who had returned to Covent Garden, led to a step, the consequences of which have been of immense importance to the English stage—and not the less valuable because, as in all other great changes, excess and abuse have occasionally entailed misfortune and merited reprobation. I complained to Mr. Kemble that a thousand pounds were frequently lavished on a Christmas pantomime or an Easter spectacle, while the plays of Shakespeare were put upon the stage with make-shift scenery, and, at the best, a new dress or two for the principal characters. That although his brother John, whose classical mind revolted from the barbarisms which even a Garrick had tolerated, had abolished the bag wig of Brutus and the gold-laced suit of Macbeth, the alterations made in the costumes of the plays founded upon English history in particular, while they rendered them more picturesque, added but little to their propriety; the whole series,

King Lear included, being dressed in habits of the Elizabethan era, the third reign after its termination with Henry VIII., and, strictly speaking, very inaccurately representing the costume even of that period. At that time I had turned my attention but little to the subject of costume, which afterwards became my most absorbing study; but the slightest reflection was sufficient to convince any one that some change of fashion must have taken place in the civil and military habits of the people of England during several hundred years. I remembered our Life-Guards in cocked hats, powder, and pigtails, and they were at that moment wearing helmets and cuirasses. It was not requisite to be an antiquary to see the absurdity of the soldiers before Angiers, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, being clothed precisely the same as those fighting at Bosworth at the end of the fifteenth. If one style of dress was right, the other must be wrong. Mr. Kemble admitted the fact, and perceived the pecuniary advantage that might result from the experiment. It was decided that I should make the necessary researches, design the dresses, and superintend the production of "King John," *gratuitously*, I beg leave to say; solely and purely for that love of the stage, which has ever induced me to sacrifice all personal considerations to what I sincerely believed would tend to elevate

as well as adorn it. Fortunately I obtained, through a mutual friend, an introduction to Doctor, afterwards Sir Samuel Meyrick, who had just published his elaborate and valuable work, "A Critical Inquiry into Ancient Arms and Armour," and was forming that magnificent and instructive collection now exhibiting at South Kensington. How little did I dream at that time that I should ever be called on to arrange it twice for public exhibition!—at Manchester, in 1857, and at South Kensington, in 1868. He entered most warmly and kindly into my views, pointed out to me the best authorities, and gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Francis Douce, the eminent antiquary, from whom also I met with the most cordial reception.

This gentlemen had assisted Mr. John Kemble when he introduced several alterations in the costume of Shakespeare's plays, particularly those founded on Roman history; for which latter, however, he drew his materials from the columns and arches of the emperors, and not from contemporaneous republican authorities. When urged to do so, and to "reform it altogether," he exclaimed to Mr. Douce, in a tone almost of horror, "Why, if I did, sir, they would call me an antiquary." "And this to me, sir!" said the dear old man, when he told me of this circumstance, "to *me*, who flattered myself I *was* an antiquary."

Mr. Douce speedily discovered that, so far from having any objection to incur the risk of such a reproach, it was my ambition to deserve the appellation, and most liberally placed the whole of his invaluable collection of illuminated MSS. (now in the Bodleian Library, to which he bequeathed them) at my disposal. He paid me also the great compliment of lending me his fine copy of Strutt's "Dress and Habits of the People of England," coloured expressly for him by its author. "I will lend *you* books, sir, because you love them and will take care of them;" I think he added, "and will return them" — a more uncommon virtue to possess than the two former. At any rate, I can honestly say that I justified his confidence. Dr. Meyrick was equally kind and of great assistance to me, for of armour our artists and actors in those days knew even less than of civil costume. In the theatre, however, my innovations were regarded with distrust and jealousy. Mr. Fawcett, the stage-manager, considered his dignity offended by the production of the play being placed under my direction. He did not speak to me, except when obliged by business, for, I think, nearly three years; but I lived it down, and remained very good friends with that excellent actor to the day of his death. Mr. Farley—dear old Charles Farley —also took huff. He was the recognised purveyor

and director of spectacle, and dreaded "the dimming of his shining star." The expenditure of a few hundred pounds on any drama, except an Easter piece or a Christmas pantomime, was not to be tolerated. "Besides," he piteously exclaimed, "if Shakspeare is to be produced with such splendour and attention to costume, what am I to do for the holidays?" He was not quite so openly rude to me as Fawcett, but he didn't like me a bit the better *then*, though he also came round in the end, and was one of the warmest admirers of *my* Easter pieces. Never shall I forget the dismay of some of the performers when they looked upon the flat-topped *chapeaux de fer* (*fer blanc*, I confess) of the 12th century, which they irreverently stigmatized as *stewpans!* Nothing but the fact that the classical features of a Kemble were to be surmounted by a precisely similar abomination would, I think, have induced one of the rebellious barons to have appeared in it. They had no faith in me, and sulkily assumed their new and strange habiliments, in the full belief that they should be roared at by the audience. They *were* roared at; but in a much more agreeable way than they had contemplated. When the curtain rose, and discovered King John dressed as his effigy appears in Worcester Cathedral, surrounded by his barons sheathed in mail, with cylindrical helmets and correct

armorial shields, and his courtiers in the long tunics and mantles of the thirteenth century, there was a roar of approbation, accompanied by four distinct rounds of applause, so general and so hearty, that the actors were astonished, and I felt amply rewarded for all the trouble, anxiety, and annoyance I had experienced during my labours. Receipts of from 400*l.* to 600*l.* nightly soon reimbursed the management for the expense of the production, and a complete reformation of dramatic costume became from that moment inevitable upon the English stage.

That I was the original cause of this movement is certain. That without fee or reward, and in defiance of every obstacle that could be thrown in my path by rooted prejudice and hostile interest, I succeeded in the object I had honestly at heart, I am proud to declare; but if propriety be pushed to extravagance, if what should be mere accessories are occasionally elevated by short-sighted managers into the principal features of their productions, I am not answerable for their suicidal folly. To a certain degree, therefore, I coincide with Mr. Percy Fitzgerald in the views he has expressed in his two recent publications, "The Principles of Comedy and Dramatic Effect" and "The Lives of the Kembles;" but when he says in the latter work (vol. i. p. 323), that "There are certain

conventional types of costume and illustration to which an audience is accustomed, and which indicate *sufficiently* the era to which the piece belongs; and this is all that is required—all that will harmonize with the grand objects of interest, the progress of character, and the action of the drama,"—I am at a loss to conceive what he would consider a conventional type of costume to which an audience of the present day would feel accustomed—say, in the play just spoken of, "King John."

What *conventional* costume would he suggest for the historical characters of the kings of England and France, the Duke of Austria, the Earls of Salisbury and Pembroke, and Queen Eleanor? He will be pleased to learn that Mrs. Siddons was of his opinion, and expressed herself to her brother Charles in precisely the same terms: "It was sufficient for the dresses to be conventional." I must regret that I had no conversation with her on the subject, for I should have much liked to have heard from her own lips her definition of the word "conventional" as applied to costume or scenery. I can perfectly understand "King John" or any other historical play being acted in plain evening dress without any scenery at all, and interpreted by great actors interesting the audience to such a degree that imagination would supply the picturesque

accessories to them as sufficiently as it does to the reader of the play in his study. But go one step beyond this: what conventional attire could be assumed by the performers that would be endured in these days by the least critical play-goers? If the king is to be crowned, what would be the conventional shape of the diadem? If a knight is to be armed, what would be the conventional character of the armour? Are we to ignore the information which has been obtained on such subjects because it may not be perfectly correct, and wilfully present to the public that which we know to be entirely erroneous, thereby falsely impressing the minds of the uneducated, whose instruction as well as amusement is the bounden duty of the stage? It is quite true that we are at present in considerable ignorance as to the exact appearance of a Scotch nobleman in the days when Edward the Confessor reigned in England; but for that reason shall we return from the nearest approach to it we are now enabled to make, to the scarlet and gold-laced general's uniform sported by Garrick in Macbeth, or even the military head-gear of the gallant 42nd Highlanders worn by John Kemble until Walter Scott with his own hands plucked the huge, funereal, black plume out of his bonnet and substituted for it the single broad eagle's feather, the time-honoured dis-

tinction of a Highland chieftain? I shall have such frequent occasion to return to this subject in the course of these Recollections, that I will dwell no longer upon it at present.

One ludicrous result I must needs chronicle. A melodrama, *quasi* historical, was announced for production at the Coburg Theatre, now known as the "Victoria," under the title of "William the Conqueror, or the Battle of Hastings." In imitation of the Covent Garden playbill, a long and imposing (very imposing in this instance) list of authorities was quoted for the new dresses and decorations, most of them being those general works on costume and armour which I had enumerated in the announcement of "King John." Curious to observe the effect of such a representation on a transpontine public, I obtained a private box, and was seated in it long before the rising of the curtain. The house was crammed to the ceiling; and in the very centre of the pit, a most conspicuous object amongst the dingy denizens of the New Cut and St. George's Fields, who filled it to suffocation, arose the snow-white powdered head of the learned and highly respected Dr. Coombe, the Keeper of the Medals at the British Museum, who, attracted as I had been by the "promissory note" of preparation, had unfortunately neglected to provide

himself, as I had done, with a "coin of vantage" from whence he could witness the performance in ease and comfort, without peril to his best black suit and immaculate neckcloth. There was no possibility of extricating him from the spot in which he was wedged; and I could only hope, therefore, that the brilliancy of the spectacle would atone for the discomfort of his position.

The hope was fallacious. I will not attempt to describe dresses that were indescribable, even by the indefinite term of conventional, and in which I could not detect the faintest resemblance to any pourtrayed in the works so unblushingly cited; but the banners of the rival hosts had obviously been painted from authorities which would have been admitted indisputable by the whole College of Heralds. Armorial bearings, it is true, were not known in the days of the Conqueror, but overlooking that slight anachronism, and the rather important fact that the arms were not even those borne by the direct descendants of the contending chieftains, the coats, crests, and supporters displayed were heraldically correct, and undeniably those of departed English worthies, noble and gentle, for they were nothing less than the funeral hatchments of some score of lords, ladies, baronets, and members of parliament, which, having hung for the usual period

on the walls of their family mansions, had reverted to the undertaker, and been "furnished" by him, for a consideration, to the liberal and enterprising lessee of "the Coburg." There they were, and no mistake. Simply taken out of their frames, and without any alteration of the well-known lozenge form, hoisted on poles, some surmounted by cherubims, others by skulls with crossbones. A wicked wag might have managed, by the exercise of a little ingenuity, to have appropriated the "hatchments" to the principal personages. The ambitious Norman duke, who aspired to a kingly crown, might have been preceded by one which bore for motto, "Spero meliora." A hint might have been conveyed to the bellicose Bishop of Bayeux by another, with "In cœlo quies;" and the royal Saxon standard might have drooped over the prostrate Harold, with "Requiescat in pace." I can scarcely hope to be believed when I assert that this ridiculous and disgraceful exhibition excited neither shouts of derision nor symptoms of disgust amongst the general audience. I certainly cannot say that the piece was received with enthusiasm; but it escaped the condign punishment which its absurdity and bad taste richly deserved.

In August, 1824, I was again in Paris, and passed a most enjoyable time there with Kemble and Young, MM. Croznier and Merle (the popular dramatic authors

and directors of the Porte St. Martin), and some of the principal actors and actresses of that day, amongst whom I may mention Madame Dorval, the celebrated melodramatic actress, and Mazurier, the wonderful pantomimist, whose performances in "Jocko; ou, le Singe de Brésil," which I afterwards arranged for him at Covent Garden, and "Polichinelle," were and have hitherto remained incomparable. I returned to England with Mr. Kemble and his eldest daughter, Fanny, who had been *en pension* in Paris, and subsequently on the stage of Covent Garden established her hereditary right to the throne of English tragedy. On the 9th of November, "Lord Mayor's Day," in that year, I produced at Covent Garden my adaptation of Rowley's comedy, "A Woman Never Vext," with a pageant of the "Lord Mayor's Show," as it appeared in the reign of Henry VI. The comedy was in five acts; and, at one of the last rehearsals, Fawcett asked me if I had written a prologue. "No." "A five-act play, and no prologue!—they'll tear up the benches!" They did nothing of the sort. The play, admirably acted by Young, Charles Kemble, Keeley, and the beautiful Miss Chester, who certainly looked "a woman never vexed," was a great success, and the custom for prologues to

> "—— Precede the piece in mournful verse,
> As undertakers strut before the hearse,"

was broken through for the first time, without the slightest notice being taken of it by the public.

On the occasion of the coronation of Charles X. of France, 29th May, 1825, I was selected by Mr. Kemble to make the drawings of dresses and decorations prepared for that ceremony, and superintend a representation of it at Covent Garden. Furnished with letters of introduction to several influential personages both at Paris and at Rheims, I proceeded to Calais, where I awaited the arrival of the Duke of Northumberland, envoy extraordinary appointed to convey the congratulations of King George IV. to the new sovereign of France, and to invest his most Christian Majesty with the Order of the Garter. His Grace entered the harbour the next morning, amidst a salute from the frigate which had escorted him and the town batteries, entertained at dinner the British Consul, the English naval officers, the mayor of Calais, and the principal local authorities, civil and military, and slept that night at Dessein's. The bill was enormous; but it would have been paid without a murmur, if the proprietor had not been so short-sighted as to charge a couple of francs for a broken wine-glass! This piece of stupidity —for the few sous could scarcely have been a matter of calculation in such an account—so exasperated and disgusted Mr. Hunter, the King's messenger, who had the

entire travelling arrangements of the mission under his control, that he took the Duke to Boulogne on his way back, and sailed from that port to Dover, avoiding Calais, and thereby depriving Monsieur Dessein of more francs than would have purchased a wagon-load of wine-glasses. At Paris every facility was afforded me of inspecting the regalia, the royal robes, the state dresses of the great officers, the magnificent uniforms of the "Cent Suisses," &c., through the kind instrumentality of the Viscountess Dowager of Hawarden and others to whom I was "accredited" as "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary" from the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden; amongst the rest to a very illustrious theatrical potentate—the great tragedian Talma,—whose reception of me was most cordial, and whose acquaintance I regret I had not more frequent opportunities of cultivating. I saw him act his celebrated characters of "Néron" and "Manlius," in which the well-known "Qu'en dis-tu?" reminded me of some of the peculiar *points* of Kean, between whose style of acting and his own there was considerable resemblance generally, Talma having the advantage in voice, and in some respects in person. On leaving Paris he presented me with two engraved portraits of himself subscribed with his autograph, one of which I gave some years afterwards to the Garrick Club.

I travelled to Rheims in company with Arthur Ruinart, youngest son of Mons. Ruinart de Brimont,* mayor of Rheims, and head of the well-known house of "Ruinart et Comp^ie," the principal growers, at that time, of the Sillery Champagne. As I had a letter to his father, we speedily fraternized, and a most amiable and agreeable companion I found him, not only on the journey but during my residence at Rheims, where he kindly constituted himself my cicerone. Mons. de Brimont had two elder sons in the business, each having separate establishments; and in addition to these three mansions, a fourth, the residence of the mother of Madame de Brimont, was with equal liberality thrown open to friends and visitors.

This fine old lady was an Englishwoman, the widow of a Mr. Plowden. She had resided from her childhood in France, and her narrow escape from the guillotine during the Reign of Terror, as she related it herself to me, is so remarkable that I shall not apologise for its introduction. She was dragged, with a crowd of other unfortunates, before one of the sanguinary tribunals in Paris, and, having in vain pleaded her English birth, was on the point of being hurried out to the fatal tumbril awaiting its next load of victims, when one of her judges asked her of what province in England was she

* Created Vicomte de Brimont by Charles X. on this occasion.

a native? In her fright she hastily answered, "Salop!" in lieu of "Shropshire." A shout of laughter and a general clapping of hands, was followed by an order to set her at liberty; and amid shouts of "Salope! Salope!" she was pushed out into the streets, to run home she scarcely knew how, with her head on her shoulders. The young English lady was not aware that the word "Salope" was used by the lower orders in France to designate one of the filthiest of her sex, and by its utterance she had unwittingly rebutted the charge of being an aristocrat! Mrs. Plowden of course spoke French grammatically like a native, but with the most unmistakable English accent. She was a Catholic; and on inviting me for the first time to dinner, she said, "Remember it will be Friday, and you will get nothing but fish." Of course I replied that, "what I should have to eat was a matter of perfect indifference," &c. We sat down, between twenty and thirty, to one of the most sumptuous banquets I ever partook of,—everything, in truth, being fish, from the soup to the dessert, but it would have puzzled a conjuror to have discovered it without some previous intimation. My mornings were passed drawing in the magnificent cathedral, and my evenings at the house of one or the other of this amiable family.

Amongst the letters of introduction I had brought

with me from England was one for a most important personage, Monseigneur Jean Baptiste Marie-Anne Antoine, Comte de Latil, Cardinal Archbishop of Rheims, Peer of France, who was to place the crown upon the head of his most Christian Majesty. Mr. Coutts Trotter, on hearing of the object of my journey, said to me, "I will give you a letter which will procure for you every advantage you can desire at Rheims. At the time of the Revolution the Archbishop (then simply Abbé de Latil) took refuge in our house at Colmar, in Alsace, and at the risk of our own ruin we refused to give him up to the Government, to whom he had rendered himself particularly obnoxious by his strong Bourbon partisanship. Since the Restoration, when he was made Bishop of Chartres, he has repeatedly made us offers of service, and pressed us to visit him. I will now write and say that any obligations he may suppose himself under to us we shall consider repaid by his attention to you." He did so, and consequently as soon as I learned that his Eminence had arrived I repaired to the palace and presented my credentials. I was received with effusion. The Cardinal pressed my hand between both his own, declared that he owed his life to my friend, and that he was grateful to Providence for having given him this first opportunity of evincing his sense of the immense obligations he was under to Mr.

Coutts Trotter. What could he do for me? Give me a good place in the cathedral to witness the coronation. Oh, that of course. The tickets had not yet been issued, but he expected them hourly; in the meanwhile I must come and dine with him. Where was I staying? I gave him my address, and added that I was always to be found at Monsieur de Brimont's, the mayor. Hah! that was an address he could never forget; and after many more pressures of my hand and protestations of affection for my introducer, I took my leave, most favourably prepossessed by the charm of his manner, the music of his voice, the graceful dignity of his demeanour, and that benevolent smile of an aged man which an Oriental writer extols as surpassing in sweetness that of a lovely woman.

I must confess that although I was faring "sumptuously every day," I looked forward with some curiosity to a veritable "bocca di cardinali." One of the best places in the cathedral he would no doubt secure for me, but hundreds would see the show as well, though not better. But a dinner "en petit comité" with a cardinal! Alas! it was not to be. His Eminence had miscalculated the strength of his memory and his gratitude. I never heard a word from him from that moment. The wealth and position of the persons who had saved his life at Colmar placed them

above any pecuniary recompense or the reception of any personal favours. They had condescended to give him an opportunity of wiping off his heavy obligations by an ordinary courtesy to one of their friends, and he neglected it—never even wrote to them to explain or apologize. I need scarcely say their indignation was intense, and when in 1830 the Archbishop had again to fly for his life, and narrowly escaped with it from the enraged populace, who broke into his hotel in Paris and threw his furniture out of the windows into the Seine, was it possible for them to feel the slightest sympathy for his second reverse of fortune? It is quite true that gratitude is not one of the "four cardinal virtues."

As far as my mission was concerned, however, I suffered no loss by the obliviousness of his Eminence. I had excellent seats secured for me by the kindness of the mayor and of my friends in the British embassy both for the coronation and the subsequent installation of the knights of the order of the St. Esprit. The entrance of the king and royal family, accompanied by detachments from all the principal regiments in the service, to the amount of ten thousand men, was an exceedingly fine sight, which I witnessed from the windows of my own lodgings. The coronation was the grandest spectacle I have ever seen, and the

installation on the day following one of the most interesting from the celebrity of the persons present. The Duc d'Angoulême, "the Dauphin," as he was then designated, heir presumptive to the throne of France, and husband of "Madame," only daughter of the unfortunate Louis XVI.; the venerable Duc de Bourbon-Condé, father of the Duc d'Enghien, whose execution at Vincennes by the arbitrary order of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1804 excited the sympathy of Europe, and Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, afterwards "King of the French." Next to these royal personages, and equal to them in celebrity, were Talleyrand and Chateaubriand, who, though political opponents, advanced together to receive the *accolade* from their sovereign. Talleyrand, who was lame, stumbled as he approached the throne, and was courteously supported by his adversary. A murmur ran through the august assembly, and I have no doubt "le Français né malin" indulged in many an epigram on the occasion. As I shall not have any reason to mention Talleyrand again, I will venture to record an anecdote of him, related to me by the late Duchess of Norfolk, which I have not met with in print, and which amusingly illustrates his diplomatic discretion. A tradesman, to whom he was indebted a considerable sum, having made many unsuccessful efforts to obtain

payment, planted himself in the *porte cochère* of the prince's hotel, and resolutely accosted him as he was entering his carriage. "Que me voulez-vous, monsieur?" asked the minister. "Monseigneur, je veux seulement savoir *quànd* son Excellence voudrait bien me payer?" "Vous êtes bien curieux," observed his Excellency, pulling up the window. The story is not apropos of his Excellency being made a knight of the order of the *Saint* Esprit, but that he was entitled to the grand cordon of the order of *Beaux* Esprits there are sufficient proofs, independent of this evasive answer.

I returned to Paris on the 5th of June, the day before his Majesty, and witnessed his arrival in state at the Tuileries from the windows of the apartments of Sir John Burke at the corner of the Rues de Rivoli and Castiglione, and on the 10th of July "the pageant of the Coronation of Charles X." was produced at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, with a prelude by Peake entitled "The Ramsbottoms at Rheims," a name made popular at that period by a series of letters in the "John Bull" newspaper, edited by Theodore Hook, and wherein a Mrs. Ramsbottom promulgated her opinions "on things in general" something in the style of our later acquaintance Mrs. Brown. It had been anticipated by a few evenings at Drury Lane, according to the discourteous and discreditable custom of English

theatrical management; but the hasty, slovenly, and inaccurate exhibition* was speedily eclipsed by the "real Simon Pure," to the truth of which the testimony of many eye-witnesses of the ceremony at Rheims was publicly recorded.

My theatrical labours in the year 1825 terminated with the production at the Adelphi, then under the management of Messrs. Terry and Yates, of a one-act piece on the 12th of December, entitled "Success; or, a Hit if you Like it," which I only mention because it was the first attempt in this country to introduce that class of entertainment so popular in Paris called "Revue," and of which, with one solitary exception, I believe I have been the sole contributor to the English stage. This rather bold experiment, illustrated by the talent of Wrench, Terry, Yates, T. P. Cooke, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and other deservedly favourite performers, was a "success" so satisfactory that it encouraged me to follow it up as occasion presented itself, and if I am any judge of my own works these "pièces de circonstance," though inevitably ephemeral from their nature, are amongst the most creditable of my dramatic compositions.

* The interior of the Cathedral was painted from an engraving of the ceremony of the coronation of Louis XVI., when the decorations were altogether dissimilar.

CHAPTER V.

THE year 1826 is memorable in the annals of music, for it is that in which Carl Maria von Weber produced his last great opera, "Oberon," on the English stage. The deathless work of a dying man. Mr. Charles Kemble having engaged the celebrated composer of "Der Freischütz" to write an opera expressly for the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, I had the honour of being selected to furnish the libretto, the subject having been chosen by Weber himself. His letters to me from Dresden during the progress of the work have been already published more or less accurately in some editions of the opera for sale in the theatre, and, gratifying to me in every way as are their contents, I refrained from reprinting them in "London Society;" but I shall not apologize for their insertion here in their integrity, for two reasons: Firstly, because they contain such interesting evidence of the thoughtfulness and sound critical judgment of the composer, as well as of the amiability of the man, that it is due to him they

should be incorporated in a history of the production of his opera by the writer of the *libretto;* and, secondly, as proofs of the disadvantages under which both of us laboured, and which at the distance of nearly half a century have been lost sight of by a few critics of another generation. They are three in number, and are now printed *verbatim et literatim*, no attempt having been made to rectify little inaccuracies of orthography or peculiarities of idiom, surprisingly few for a foreigner, writing English for the first time and on a matter of business. His perfect comprehension of the language was a most unexpected and agreeable discovery, as it relieved my mind from any fear of mistakes either on his part or mine, which might entail upon us long and perplexing correspondence, to avoid which as much as possible, I had taken the trouble to convey the sense of what might have been obscure passages in the text, by a literal translation into French.

WEBER'S LETTERS.

SIR,

I am most obliged to you for all the kind things you are pleased to honour me with. I can only congratulate myself to share in toils of an author who displays so much feeling and genius in his fluent verses.

The cut of an English opera is certainly very different from a German one. The English is more a drama with songs;

but in the first act of "Oberon" there is nothing that I could wish to see changed, except the finale. The chorus is conducted to its place, I think, rather forcibly, and cannot exite the interesse of the public which is linked to the sentiment of Reiza. I would wish, consequently, for some more verses full of the greatest joy and hope for Reiza, which I might unite with the chorus, and treat the latter as subordinate to Reiza's sentiments. Pardon my making use of your condescending permission. I thank you obligingly for your goodness of having translated the verses in French; but it was not so necessary, because I am, though yet a weak, a diligent student of the English language.

I am, with esteem,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

CH. M. DE WEBER.

Dresden, January 6, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received the second act of "Oberon" the 18th January, and the third act and your very amiable letter in one and the same day, the 1st February.

These two acts are also filled with the greatest beauties. I embrace the whole in love, and will endeavour not to remain behind you.

To this acknowledgment of your work you can give credit, the more, as I must repeat, that the cut of the whole is very foreign to all my ideas and maxims. The intermixing of so many principal actors who do not sing—the omission of the music in the most important moments—all these things deprive our "Oberon" of the title of an opera, and will

make him unfit for all other theatres in Europe, which is a very bad thing for me, but—passons là-dessous.

You have so well construed my first prayers, that I continue with proposals in confidence to your kindness.

The scene between Sherasmin and Fatima, in the second act, and the (very pretty) arietta of the latter, must necessarily be omitted, and the quartetto follow immediately. Also the chorus of the Pirates. But the time which we gain thereby we must spend for a duetto between Huon and Reiza. The absence of this piece of music would be very much regretted, and the scene upon the desert shore seems the most convenient place for it, though my musical heart sighs that the first moment when the loving pair find each other passes without music; but the opera appears too long already.

Now wish I yet a *mad* aria for Sherasmin, when he discover the horn, in which Fatima's lamentations unite and close the scene with a beautiful contrast.

Oh! dear sir, what would not we produce if we were living in the same town? Still I beg leave to observe that the composer looks more for the expression of feelings than the figurative; the former he may repeat and develope in all their graduations, but verses like—

> "Like the spot the tulip weareth
> Deep within its dewy urn,"

or in Huon's song—

> "Like hopes that deceive us,
> Or false friends who leave us
> Soon as descendeth prosperity's sun,"

must be said only *once*.

You see that I speak to you as an old acquaintance, and I hope, at least, that you will consider it so.

Mr. Kemble has not honoured me till now with an answer to my letter of the 6th January. I conclude from this that he is convinced of the necessity to retard the opera, and that consequently we have time to regulate our affairs. The same reason has also withheld me from replying to his letter of the 4th February, which has crossed mine of the 6th January. Yet I must own I wish to see this affair decided at Easter, because all sorts of uncertainty puzzles me, and distracts me in working.

To speak sincerely, I do not understand why our honoured friend, Mr. Kemble, hesitates to name the sum which he can offer me. He knows what length he can go to the credit of his country and establishment. I can make no demand, and I would neither appear indiscreet nor suffer injury, the latter of which I have too frequently experienced. Russia, Sweden, Holland, France, Scotland, and England have brought on the boards my performances without their being entitled to it; for my works have not been printed; and though I do not value money to take notice of it, the world forces me at last.

Pardon, dear sir, that I am molesting you with things you cannot be interested in; but poets and composers live together in a sort of angels' marriage, which demands a reciprocal trust. And now it is truly time to end my very checkered epistle.

I am, with the greatest esteem and regard,
Your most obedient servant,
C. M. VON WEBER.

Dresden, February 19, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am very ashamed to be your debtor for those

amiable letters; but you must have indulgence with a very much toiled and moiled poor man as I am.

I have now to give you an account of our "Oberon." Two acts are ended. The first is in its total state as you have written it. In the second I have yet fulfilled your wish, to compose "a lonely Arab maid;" but I would have omitted "Araby, my native land," because I fear the opera will be too long already. This song, however, shall not disunite us, and I will compose it, perhaps, first in England.

The duo for Reiza and Huon, which you were so kind as to send me, I have not composed, because, beautiful as it is, it cannot be placed in that position with effect.

Little changes to which I have permitted myself shall, as I hope, be ratified by you. My health is yet weak indeed, but much better than last winter, and if "Oberon" is yet fixed to be played on Easter Monday, 1826, I hope surely to be in London the first days of March.

I pray that you will be so good as to say to M. Livius* that I have already sent him an answer, under the date of the 18th of September, on his address, Dorset Cottage, Grosvenor Place. Not enough can I express the pleasure in hoping to make your personal acquaintance, and till then, and ever, believe me,

My dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

C. M. WEBER.

Dresden, December 3, 1825.

Such was the state of music in England six-and-forty years ago, that when in conjunction with Bishop,

* Basham Livius, an amateur author and composer, who arranged the music of "Der Freischütz" for my version of that opera, produced at Covent Garden, 14th October, 1824.

I had made an attempt in my second opera, "Cortez, or the Conquest of Mexico" (produced November 5, 1823), to introduce concerted pieces, and a finale to the 2nd act more in accordance with the rules of true operatic construction, it had proved, in spite of all the charm of Bishop's melody, a signal failure. Ballads, duets, choruses, and glees, provided they occupied no more than the fewest number of minutes possible, were all that the play-going public of that day would endure. A dramatic situation in music was "caviare to the general," and inevitably received with cries of "Cut it short!" from the gallery, and obstinate coughing or other significant signs of impatience from the pit. Nothing but the Huntsman's Chorus and the diablerie in "Der Freischütz" saved that fine work from immediate condemnation in England; and I remember perfectly well the exquisite melodies in it being compared by English musical *critics* to "wind through a key-hole!"* An immense responsibility was placed upon my shoulders. The fortunes of the season were staked upon the success of the piece. Had I constructed it in the form which would have been most agreeable to me and acceptable to Weber, it could not

* In a number of the "Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review," for June, 1825, a critic describing the music of "Der Freischütz," says, "Nearly all that was not irresistibly ridiculous, was supremely dull."

have been performed by the company at Covent Garden, and if attempted must have proved a complete fiasco. None of our actors could sing, and but one singer could act—Madame Vestris—who made a charming Fatima. A young lady who subsequently became one of the most popular actresses in my recollection was certainly included in the cast; but she had not a line to speak, and was pressed into the service in consequence of the paucity of vocalists, as she had a sweet though not very powerful voice, and was even then artist enough to be entrusted with anything. That young lady was Miss Goward, now Mrs. Keeley, and to her was assigned the exquisite Mermaid Song in the finale to the second act. At the first general rehearsal, with full band, scenery, &c., the effect was not satisfactory, and Fawcett, in his usual brusque manner, exclaimed, "That must come out!—it won't go!" Weber, who was standing in the pit, leaning on the back of the orchestra, so feeble that he could scarcely stand without such support, shouted, "Wherefore shall it not go?" and leaping over the partition like a boy, snatched the baton from the conductor, and saved from excision one of the most delicious *morceaux* in the opera. No vocalist could be found equal to the part of Sherasmin. It was, therefore, acted by Fawcett, and a bass singer, named Isaacs, was lugged in

head and shoulders to eke out the charming quatuor, "Over the Dark Blue Waters." Braham, the greatest English tenor perhaps ever known, was about the worst actor ever seen, and the most unromantic person in appearance that can well be imagined. His deserved popularity as a vocalist induced the audience to overlook his deficiencies in other qualifications, but they were not the less fatal to the dramatic effect of the character of Huon de Bordeaux, the dauntless paladin who had undertaken to pull a hair out of the Caliph's beard, slay the man who sat on his right hand, and kiss his daughter! Miss Paton, with a grand soprano voice, and sufficiently prepossessing person, was equally destitute of histrionic ability, and consequently of the four principal parts in the opera only one was adequately represented, that of Fatima by Madame Vestris. Amongst the minor characters, Miss Harriet Cawse, a pupil of Sir George Smart's, distinguished herself as an arch and melodious Puck, and did her "spiriting gently," and Mr. Charles Bland, brother of James the future king of extravaganza, was happily gifted with a voice which enabled him to execute at least respectably the airs assigned to the King of the Fairies. The composer therefore had justice fairly done to *him*, and any short-comings, as far as the drama was concerned, were of secondary unport-

ance. My great object was to land Weber safe amidst an unmusical public, and I therefore wrote a melo-drama with songs, instead of an opera, such as would be required at the present day. I am happy to say that I succeeded in that object, and had the great gratification of feeling that he fully appreciated my motives, and approved of my labours. On the morning after the production of the opera (April 12), I met him on the stage. He embraced me most affectionately, and exultingly exclaimed, "Now we will go to work and write another opera together, and *then* they shall see what we can do!" "Man proposes and Heaven disposes." In a few weeks after I followed him to his grave! "Oberon" was the song of the dying swan. The hand of death was upon him before he commenced it, and the increasing weight upon his spirit is unmistakably evident in the latter portion of his work. The last air of Rieza, "Mourn, thou poor Heart," necessitating, unfortunately, plaintive expression, was a wail of such unrelieved dreariness that, coming late in the opera, it was worse than ineffective, and is, I believe, omitted even in Germany.

Much has been said of the want of human interest in the story. The same complaint might be made of nearly every drama founded on a fairy tale, or in which supernatural agency is employed to work out the plot.

But it seems to have escaped the objectors that, as far as the expression of the passions is concerned, there can be no difference, either in words or music, whether the personages are mortals or fairies. The love, the jealousy, the anger, the despair of an elf or a demon must be told in the same language, and set to the same notes, as would be employed to express similar emotions in human beings, while much more scope is given to the fancy of the composer in the supernatural situations. But, independently of this argument, the trials of Huon and Rieza are amongst the severest known to humanity—shipwreck on a desolate island, —separation—slavery—temptation in its most alluring forms, and the imminent danger of death in the most fearful—not, as the writer of "The Life of Weber" incorrectly states, "with the lily wand of Oberon always behind them," but utterly hopeless of fairy aid; for the magic horn that should evoke it is lost before their trials commence, and only recovered at the last moment, to bring the opera to a happy termination.

That I may have failed in my attempt to depict the passions aroused by those situations is another question, and that I leave the critics to decide. I simply contend that the charge of want of human interest in the story is not founded on fact; and that Weber should have preferred a fairy subject to one of purely human

interest, proves that as a musician he did not see the objection; while the exquisite opening in Oberon's palace, the chorus of the spirits of the elements in the storm-scene, and the unrivalled finale to the second act, including the mermaids' song, display the power as well as the desire to deal with the wild and wonderful, of which he had already given such evidence in "Der Freischütz."

Mr. Charles Kemble was in Scotland, fulfilling a provincial engagement, when "Oberon" was produced, and wrote to me the following letter:—

Glasgow, April 17, 1826.

MY DEAR PLANCHÉ,

Allow me to offer you my best thanks and congratulations upon the success of "Oberon."

Though I have been absent, I have not been the less interested about your piece. My anxiety has truly been very great, and my joy at the result, as you may naturally suppose, proportionately gigantic. I think I like your verses better in print than manuscript. That is not the case with the verses of most authors, for many of whom it would be better never to have gone to press. I shall see you in a day or two; but will not deny myself the pleasure of letting you know how sincerely I am delighted at your success, all selfish feelings out of the question. "From the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh," and, I will add, the hand writeth on this occasion. That you may witness many such triumphs in Covent Garden Theatre is the sincere wish of,

My dear Planché,

Yours most faithfully,

C. KEMBLE.

According to the courteous custom which has prevailed time out of mind in English theatricals, an Easter piece on the subject of "Oberon" had been rushed out at Drury Lane in anticipation of Weber's opera, and, in addition to this, Bishop was engaged to write an opera to be produced in opposition to it, the libretto by George Soane being founded on the popular story of "Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp." It was not very favourably received, and the delicious warbling of Miss Stephens could not secure for it more than a lingering existence of a few nights. Tom Cooke, the leader of the orchestra at Drury Lane, one of the cleverest musicians and most amusing of men, met Braham in Bow Street, and asked him how his opera ("Oberon") was going. "Magnificently!" replied the great tenor, and added, in a fit of what he used to call *enthoosemusy*, "not to speak it profanely, it will run to the day of judgment!"—"My dear fellow," rejoined Cooke, "that's nothing! Ours has run five nights afterwards!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE proprietors of Vauxhall Gardens were at that period Messrs. Hughes and Gye, the latter gentleman, M.P. for Chippenham, being the father of the present Mr. Frederick Gye, lessee and director of the Royal Italian Opera. I was requested by them to draw up a scheme for some novel entertainment, and very liberal terms were offered me to undertake its production. I sketched out a programme, and submitted it for their consideration; but I need not have taken the trouble. I soon discovered that Mr. Hughes had an *idée fixe*. He was passionately fond of music, and believed that a grand concert would be more attractive at Vauxhall than any spectacular entertainment. He had already made liberal offers to several of our most eminent vocalists, but not one could be tempted to sing at Vauxhall. I had no opinion of the scheme, and frankly told him so; but finding he had set his heart upon it, and was prepared to take upon himself the entire responsibility of

the result, I consented to attempt carrying out his plans in lieu of my own, and in less than a fortnight, as much to his surprise as his delight, he held in his hands the signed engagements of Braham, Sinclair, Miss Stephens, Madame Vestris, and Miss Love, all of whom had previously declined his highest offers. The simple secret of my success lay in the fact that I had gone at once to Bishop, and put before him an agreement to act as director and composer, at terms to be inserted by himself, with full power to engage the first vocal and instrumental talent in the country. Having secured him, and thereby given a guarantee for the character of the concert, all the others followed like a flock of sheep. The speculation, however, proved, as I had anticipated, anything but profitable to the proprietors, but they bore their loss gallantly, and paid every one without a murmur.

Previously to the opening of the gardens I had run over to Paris, and ineffectually endeavoured to lure that exquisite vocalist Mrs. Salmon back to public life. She was residing in a charming house in the Allée des Veuves, Champs Elysées, and very wisely, I acknowledge, declined risking her great reputation by a return to the profession of which she had been so long a "bright particular star." Those yet living who can remember her render-

ing of "From mighty kings he took the spoil," at the Ancient Concerts, will, I think, agree with me that for luscious sweetness of tone, purity of style, and power of expression, Mrs. Salmon was and remains unrivalled amongst English sopranos. T. P. Cooke and his wife were at this moment in Paris, he having accepted an engagement to perform at the Porte St. Martin, in a French version of Peake's melodrama "Frankenstein, or the modern Prometheus," his original part of the monster, which he, rather than the modern Prometheus, had created at the Lyceum Theatre in London. My visit to the French capital had been so suddenly determined on, that I had not apprised any one of my coming, and on the first night of my arrival, I made my way to Cooke's lodgings, where, cruel as it seemed, I could scarcely forbear laughing to find him laid up with the gout. The monster, who was to frighten all the fair Parisians into fits, moping in an arm-chair, with his foot enveloped in flannel deposited on another, in a state of helpless inactivity! There was something exceedingly ludicrous in the position; but it was no laughing matter to him, poor fellow. There he was, literally tied by the leg, unable even to attend rehearsals, and uncertain whether he would be well enough to make his appearance before the expiration of his *congé* from Mr. Arnold. He had never had the

gout before, and attributed the attack to the acidity of the French wines. Fortunately it was as short as it was sharp, and his success was so great that "monstre bleu," the colour he painted himself, became the fashion of the day in Paris. By Cooke I was introduced to Odry, the Liston of the French stage, and his wife, who prided herself on being an Englishwoman, having been "born Brown Bear, Piccadilly," as she expressed herself—the only four words of English she had brought away with her. Odry was fond of the English, but a staunch Napoleonist, and invariably terminated his eulogy of England with the reproachful question—"Pourquoi as-tu tué mon Empereur?"

The admirable Potier was at that time under an engagement to Laporte, who in conjunction with Cloup and Pellissié had the direction of the French company performing in London, and as he (Potier) spoke no English, and had never visited this country, I was asked to take him with me on my return, a request to which I joyfully acceded. We secured the coupé of the French malle-poste, and a more agreeable companion to while away the tedium of the many long hours which were at that time occupied in travelling even by post the distance between Paris and Calais, could not have been found. Laporte, himself an excellent come-

dian, met us at Dover, where we dined, and then started all three by coach for London.

It was broad daylight by the time we reached the junction of the Greenwich and Old Kent roads, and a sight suddenly presented itself to the eyes of our visitor which astonished, interested, and amused him to the greatest extent. On each side of the road, four or five deep, a line of human beings extended as far as the eye could reach; men and women, boys and girls, the majority of the adults of both sexes in every possible stage of intoxication, yelling, screaming, dancing, fighting, playing every conceivable antic, and making every inconceivable noise. For the instant I was almost as much surprised as my companions, and as little able to account for the extraordinary and unexpected scene; but after a few minutes I recollected it was the morning of the Wednesday in Easter week, and the end of Greenwich Fair, and these dregs of the London populace, which had for three days made the pretty Kentish borough a bear-garden, and its fine old park a pandemonium, were now flowing in a turbid flood of filth, rags, debauchery, and drunkenness, back to their sources in the slums of the metropolis. There was no picturesque costume to fascinate the eye of the artist, no towering *cauchoise* with its frills and streamers, no snow-white caps, short scarlet

petticoats and blue stockings, no embroidered velvet bodices, no quaint gold or silver head-gear, no jacket gay with countless buttons, no hat bedecked with ribbons, no coquettish Montero—all was dirt and squalor, draggled dresses, broken bonnets, hats without crowns, coats and trousers in tatters. Such was the British public as it first appeared to the great French comedian.

"Mais comme c'est drôle! Tout le monde porte chapeau!" was his first exclamation after I had explained to him the character of the crowd in the midst of which we had so suddenly found ourselves. For in no similar assemblage in France, or indeed in Europe, would he have seen so many hats and bonnets; and it is this peculiarity which makes an English mob look so much more disreputable than a foreign one. Abroad, not one woman in a hundred of the lower classes, would wear a tawdry, trumpery bonnet, made in what is supposed to be the fashion, and which can never cause them to be taken for ladies, though it exposes them to the disgrace of a very different misapprehension. If an honest desire to become better than we are could supersede the vulgar ambition to seem of more consequence than we are, how infinitely happier and richer would be the community in general! Is

there no compulsory education that could effect so important an improvement?

The theatre at which Potier made his first appearance in England, on Friday, May 19th, 1826, was the little building in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, now so popular as "The Prince of Wales's." I knew the builders, and was frequently within the walls during its construction. Like the Olympic, it was originally intended for equestrian performances, and rejoiced in a ring, which speedily gave place to a pit, and was, at the period I am now speaking of, as dark and dingy a den as ever sheltered the children of Thespis. Like the Olympic also, its out-of-the-way situation and humble neighbourhood did not prevent "the upper ten thousand" from visiting it. "Chacun prend son plaisir où il le trouve," and the highest in the land found theirs in the "low latitudes" of the little "West London Theatre," as it was then designated. I was present one evening when H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, in a pit box, revealed the whole plot of a vaudeville which had amused him to the Duchess, whom he had brought to see it, as it progressed, in so loud a voice that he took the entire *parterre* into his confidence, the foreign portion of which, being unaccustomed to so peculiar a "programme de spectacle," and unconscious of the rank of

the illustrious expositor, most ungratefully repaid him for the information by shouts of "à la porte!" *anglicè*, "turn him out!" His royal highness, being fortunately hard of hearing, remained ignorant of the discourtesy, and continued his commentaries in stentorian tones to the fall of the curtain.

On the 25th May I received the following note from Weber, enclosing tickets for his concert,* which took place the following evening:—

* "With C. M. Von Weber's best compliments to his dear friend, Mr. Planché, and he hopes to have the honour of seeing him and Mrs. Planché on the concert. In presenting the enclosed, he will be most happy to send more, if desired."

These were the last lines he wrote to me. Ten days afterwards (5th of June) he was found dead in his bed by Sir George Smart, in whose house, 91, Great Portland Street, he resided; and on the 21st I attended the funeral, by invitation, riding in the third coach with Moschelles, to the Roman Catholic chapel in Moorfields, where the body found a temporary resting-place, previous to its removal to Germany.

* At the rehearsal the Chorus commenced singing a prayer at the top of their lungs. Weber hushed them down instantly, exclaiming: "If you were in the presence of God Almighty, you would not speak loud."

The following verses, hastily thrown off by me on receiving the sad tidings of his death, were afterwards set by Braham, who introduced some of the most popular melodies in the opera of Der Freischütz, and sang them with great feeling and effect on the occasion of the Benefit for the widow and family. The lines have no claim to literary merit; but they sincerely, as spontaneously, expressed my sorrow, and faithfully described his character:—

"Weep! for the word is spoken!
Mourn—for the knell hath knoll'd;
The master-chord is broken,
And the master-hand is cold!
Romance hath lost her minstrel.
No more his magic strain
Shall throw a sweeter spell around
The legends of Almaine!

"His fame had flown before him
To many a foreign land;
His lays were sung by every tongue,
And harp'd by every hand.
He came to seek fresh laurels,
But Fate was in their breath,
And turned his march of triumph
Into a dirge of death!

"O! all who knew him loved him.
For, with his mighty mind,
He bore himself so meekly;
His heart—it was so kind.
His wildly warbling melodies—

The storms that round them roll *
Are types of the simplicity
And grandeur of his soul.

"Though years of ceaseless suffering
Had worn him to a shade,
So patient was his spirit,
No wayward plaint he made.
E'en Death himself seemed loth to scare
His victim pure and mild,
And stole upon him gently,
As slumber o'er a child!

"Weep! for the word is spoken;
Mourn—for the knell hath knoll'd;
The master-chord is broken,
And the master-hand is cold!"

* I find, in a contemporaneous criticism, "the *rolling* bass passage" in the orchestral accompaniments to one of his sweetest melodies, noticed as a strong proof of his regard to instrumental effects.—*Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, vol. viii.

CHAPTER VII.

About this period I was residing in Brompton Crescent, having removed thither after the termination of my engagement at the Adelphi, and in that suburban locality made the acquaintance of various literary and artistic celebrities, in whose society some of the pleasantest years of my life were passed. Jerdan, the editor of the "Literary Gazette," I am bound in gratitude to distinguish. His unvarying kindness to me and mine for upwards of thirty years imperatively demands this brief but sincere acknowledgment. He was my near neighbour, occupying a large house, with a long garden attached to it, in what was Brompton Grove, and is now Ovington Square. There I met Crofton Croker and his clever wife, Tom Hood and his brother-in-law, John Hamilton Reynolds, whose dawning genius had attracted the notice of Byron; the Rev. George Croly, author of the "Angel of the World" and the comedy of "Pride shall have a Fall," which latter work, produced at Covent Garden,

not meeting with much success, Poole, who hated him, invariably spoke of, as "Croly shall have a fall, by the Rev. George Pride," and Miss Landon—poor L. E. L. —whose early death in the fatal region of Sierra Leone caused a painful excitement in literary circles. A melancholy roll-call—not one remains to answer "Here!" Jerdan, himself the earliest born, was the latest who left us. He attained the patriarchal age of eighty-eight, dying only two years ago, June 11th, 1869, having retired from the editorship of the "Literary Gazette" in 1850. In a notice of his decease in the "Times" newspaper, it was remarked that "his kindly help was always afforded to young aspirants in literature and art, and his memory will be cherished by many whom he helped to rise to positions of honour and independence." As one who specially enjoyed that "kindly help," and was a frequent witness of its ready extension to others, it is my gratifying duty to testify to the truth of that honourable record. His buoyant spirits enabled him to bear up against "a sea of troubles," which would have overwhelmed an ordinary man. Mr. Moyes, his printer, "a canny Scot," being asked by a mutual acquaintance, "Has our friend Jerdan got through his difficulties?" characteristically exclaimed, "Difficulties! I never knew he was in any."

The genius of Tom Hood has been so generally acknowledged, his humour and his pathos so highly appreciated, and so many anecdotes recorded of him, that I shall only cite a few of his sallies, which I believe have never been chronicled. At a large dinner party at Jerdan's one of the guests indulged in some wonderful accounts of his shooting. The number of birds he had killed, and the distances at which he had brought them down, were extraordinary. Hood quietly remarked,—

> "What he hit is history,
> What he missed is mystery."

Anything more happily conceived and expressed I contend it would be difficult to discover.

At the same house, on another occasion, when Power the actor was present, Hood was asked to propose his health. After enumerating the various talents that popular comedian possessed, he requested the company to observe that such a combination was a remarkable illustration of the old proverb, "It never rains but it *powers*."

In his last illness, reduced as he was to a skeleton, he noticed a very large mustard poultice which Mrs. Hood was making for him, and exclaimed, "O Mary! Mary!—that will be a great deal of mustard to a very little meat!"

Shortly before his death, being visited by a clergyman whose features as well as language were more lugubrious than consoling, Hood looked up at him compassionately and said, "My dear sir! I'm afraid your religion doesn't agree with you."

There seemed to be a mint in his mind in which the coining of puns was incessantly and almost unconsciously in process, not with the mere object of raising a laugh, but because his marvellous command of language enabled him to use words in every possible sense in which they could be understood; and he could not help playing upon them, even in his most serious moods. For instance, in that pathetic appeal to the benevolence of the public on behalf of the widow and children of poor Elton,* the actor, who was drowned on his passage from Leith to Hull, in 1843, after most touchingly describing the lifeless hand idly playing with the tangled weed, he concludes with a parallel between the dead and the living, by imploring assistance for the latter, who is struggling "'mid *breakers* huge enough to *break* the heart." Admirably delivered as I heard it, by Mrs. Sterling, the power of the line told upon the audience with increased effect from the play on the word, which I question if any

* His real name was Elt, and he was one of a company of amateurs I belonged to.

other writer would have hazarded under such circumstances.

When the water broke into the Thames Tunnel, during the progress of the work, he said to me, "They've been labouring at that affair for a long time, and now the Thames has filled up their leisure." On my repeating this to Charles Kemble, the same afternoon, he said, "Well, Planché, I can't see anything in that so"——laughable, he would have added; but he began to laugh before he could finish the sentence.

John Hamilton Reynolds, his brother-in-law, and *collaborateur* in some of his works, less generally known to the public, was only inferior to his celebrated connection as a wit, a poet, and if I may be allowed the expression, a philosophical punster.

He was specially distinguished for the aptness of his quotations. Finding him one day lunching at the "Garrick," I asked him if the beef he was eating was good. "It would have been," he answered, "if damned custom had not *brazed* it so."

Not long before his death, he was appointed treasurer of a County Court in the Isle of Wight. It was absolute exile for a man of his town tastes and habits, and he lost no opportunity of running up, if only for a few hours, to London.

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Expatiating on the dulness of the locality to which he was relegated, and the absence of that class of society to which he had been all his life accustomed, he told me how that, one evening he had attended a tea-party, and noticing a pretty, bright-looking girl, he entered into conversation with her, and elicited from her, to his great gratification, that she was very fond of poetry. "Then, of course, you admire, as much as I do, Shakespere's exquisite comedy of 'As you like it.'" "I have read it," she answered; "but I don't understand it—." "Not understand it! Then I am afraid you don't understand a tree." This was infinitely beyond her, and with a look of blank astonishment, she replied, "I don't know what you mean." "Upon which," said Reynolds, "I took my leave of her 'under the shade of melancholy *bows*.'" The happiness of this quotation from the play itself, might have induced even Doctor Johnson to pardon the pun it inevitably suggested.

The interest Crofton Croker took in the study of antiquities was an additional bond of unison between us, and we lived much together. He used often to say to me, "Planché, you will never succeed unless you write for the pigs." My answer was invariably, "Then I never shall succeed;" and I am thankful to say, that whatever success I have been fortunate to achieve

in the course of my literary life, I have certainly not been indebted for it to any intentional sacrifice of my own principles at the shrine of popularity.

Of Lætitia Elizabeth Landon, Mr. and Mrs. Carter Hall have given so minute and interesting an account in their "Book of Memories," that it leaves me little to say, beyond adding my testimony to the truth of all they have asserted in defence of that most cruelly maligned lady, and my tribute of regret at her miserable and unmerited fate. I was her constant visitor in Hans Place, and have preserved some letters of hers, and of her friend Miss Emma Roberts; but they contain no passages that would justify quotation. I remember "L. E. L.," however, saying to me one day, when congratulating me on some recent success in the theatre, "I would give all the reputation I have gained, or am ever likely to gain, by writing books, for one great triumph on the stage. The praise of critics or friends may be more or less sincere; but the spontaneous thunder of applause of a mixed multitude of utter strangers, uninfluenced by any feelings but those excited at the moment, is an acknowledgment of gratification surpassing, in my opinion, any other description of approbation."

Of Croly I knew but little, and was not over anxious to know more. He was a man of undoubted talent,

but cold, imperious, and sarcastic. He died suddenly in 1860.

At the close of my Vauxhall engagement I left England with my wife, a friend and his wife, for a tour on the continent, leaving the Tower Stairs on Wednesday morning, August 30, on board the "Lord Melville" steam-packet, for Calais, where the following day we assisted at a wedding. The organist played "the Bridemaids'" chorus from Der Freischütz, as the young lady entered the church, and "Home sweet Home," from "Clari," as the happy couple departed. Having been so recently concerned in the production of both those operas at Covent Garden Theatre, the coincidence of my fortuitous attendance was as amusing to us as the selection of the airs was appropriate to the situations —if not to the locality. Several popular waltzes, with which the excellent performer "favoured the company," both before and during the ceremony, gave our friends a high opinion of his skill, but a rather low one of his organ—of veneration.

I am not going to inflict on my readers, in 1871, my "impressions de voyage" during a tour through the Netherlands, the north of Germany, and Holland, in 1826. Brussels, Liege, Aix-la-Chapelle, have been "done to death" since

then by hundreds of pens, more or less pointed. Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Frankfort, have suffered as severely, and as to the Rhine—Ach himmel! Such a "wacht" has been kept on it that one might as well hope to interest a Londoner with a description of the Thames from Battersea to Blackwall. Even one spot out of the common track of cockney tourists, and at the time I visited it a *terra incognita* to the majority of English travellers, has recently attracted so much attention, not only in this country but throughout Europe and the United States, in consequence of its having been selected for the *internation* of an illustrious prisoner of war, that "our special reporter," and "our American cousin," have left me nothing to say of Wilhelmshöhe, but what every one has already seen in the newspapers. I shall, therefore, get over the ground as rapidly as possible.

In the pretty little theatre of that prettiest of little German cities—Hessen-Cassel, to which Wilhelmshöhe is a picturesque appendage, we had the good fortune, the only evening we could spare for the purpose, to hear "La Vestale," conducted by its celebrated composer, Spontini himself, at that time Capel Meister to his Serene Highness the Grand Duke. A passing peep

"——— at the U-
niversity of Gottingen,"

pleasantly reminded us of the distinguished statesman whose loss we were too soon to lament, and in Brunswick, with its bronze lion of the twelfth century; in Magdeburgh with its cathedral, to which every antiquary should make a pilgrimage, and Brandenburgh with its gigantic statue of Roland, nearly twenty feet high, and apparently a work of the fourteenth century, I found more food for my archæological appetite, than I could spare time healthfully to digest.

Berlin was crammed with visitors for the great annual military manœuvres, and with difficulty we obtained apartments at the Hotel de Petersburgh, Unter den Linden. A few days after our arrival we had taken places at the Grand Opera House to witness the representation of Spontini's "Nourmahal," founded on Moore's popular poem. In the morning we had been smothered with dust at the grand review of cavalry, and afterwards driven to Charlottenburg to see the celebrated effigy of the beautiful and regretted Queen of Prussia, visited various churches, a collection of ancient paintings, the iron foundry—and, in short, had a hard day of it. The consequence was that by the time we had dined and reached the theatre, the opera had commenced, and we found the house filled to the ceiling by a most brilliant audience. Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cam-

bridge had arrived at Berlin, and the royal box, which, according to continental custom, was in the centre of the house, was occupied by the King, the Duchess of Liegnitz (his majesty's wife by a morganatic marriage, or what the Germans call "linken hand"), two of the King's brothers, the Prince and Princess Royal, Prince Albrecht, Prince Charles of Bavaria, a princess of Mecklenburgh-Strelitz—(or Schwerin), I forget which, and a splendid suite—in addition to the illustrious guests from Hanover. The general company consisted of the whole corps diplomatique, and of course officers of every rank and arm in the service, all in full-dress uniform, the majority displaying a galaxy of stars and ribbons of all the hues of the rainbow. Almost to our consternation we were politely ushered to the four seats which had been scrupulously reserved for us, the only ones in the house at that moment vacant, and immediately adjoining the Royal Box. There in our travelling attire, for we had rigidly limited our *impedimenta* to the smallest possible quantity, we endured, with as much sangfroid as we could summon to our assistance, the good-natured scrutiny of the august assembly in whose proximity we so unexpectedly found ourselves, and certainly felt we were the most "distinguished foreigners" in the theatre.

The spectacle on the stage upon this occasion was not inferior to that before the curtain. Nourmahal had undoubtedly been "got up regardless of expense." The Oriental costumes were magnificent, and, what was better, correct. An ambitious attempt to represent a tropical noon-day sun would have been a real "blaze of triumph," but for the too visible revolution of some machinery behind it intended to increase its dazzling brilliancy. All the appointments were perfect; and no wonder, for the King himself, we were told, not only contributed liberally to the funds of the establishment, but constantly went behind the scenes, personally inspected the dresses and decorations, and severely visited any *laches* of actor, artist or manager. On issuing from the theatre we saw the city under a light which was a new one even to the inhabitants themselves—"the light of other days" being superseded by gas.

All Berlin was

"——— Abroad to gaze,
And wonder at the blaze."

On the 28th of January, 1807, I had wandered down Pall Mall with my father, and seen the first lamps lighted with gas in London, and it so happened that I was accidentally present both in Berlin and Paris on the first occasion of its introduction to those capitals.

Interested as I had become in all matters of costume, civil or military, I need scarcely say that I specially enjoyed my visit to the "Rust Kammer" at Dresden, and only regretted my inability to remain and thoroughly inspect and study its wilderness of weapons, ranks of stately suits, and rare and curious pieces of tilting and other armour: but even at that time, *tyro* as I was, the absence of chronological arrangement struck me as a sad drawback on the utility of the collection to the artist, and confusing even to the casual visitor. In the Japanese Palace, also, there was a room full of veritable apparel of the 17th and 18th centuries, which I had scarcely a moment to glance at; and as, unfortunately, I have never been able to get to Dresden again, I have only a dreamy recollection of the fact, and can simply say that I am not aware of any other similar exhibition. Another great treat was in store for me at Leipzig, which we entered in the midst of its great annual Michaelmas book fair. At the Hotel de Russie, the table d'hôte was suggestive of a supper at a bal-masqué, from the infinite variety of picturesque and singular costume of the guests surrounding it—Greeks, Armenians, Russians, Turks, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Wallachians, Croats, all the Sclavonic tribes, in fine, in

addition to representatives from all the provinces in Germany, Switzerland, and the Tyrol.

From Leipzig we passed over the battle-field of Lutzen, where a stone marks the spot on which was found the body of the great Gustavus, to Weissenfels, Weimar, where we saw the hereditary Princess go out for an airing in a handsome carriage drawn by six cream colours, Erfurth, and Gotha, a place possessing now a melancholy interest for England, and I therefore transcribe from some notes I made on this tour, the following description of a locality possessing so much natural beauty, independent of the memories connected with it, that I wonder it has not been noticed by English travellers.

Sunday, Oct. 1st, the following note.—"Walked to the old Chateau, which is a large square building in a very commanding situation and surrounded by a fine terrace, which has been said, and not without some reason, *to resemble that at Windsor*. There are several beautiful gardens and parks round the town which join one another and produce a pleasing effect. The most interesting is that of the late Duke Ernest, who bequeathed it to Prince Frederick. In the centre is a lake with a woody island, in which the said Duke is buried with four of his children. There is a small

column and urn erected to the memory of the two youngest with this inscription:

Quies Ernesti et Ludovici
Carissimorum
E. D. S. G.
et
Charlottæ, Filiorum.

The other two who died subsequently to their father are buried, one on each side of him, under flower beds. He (Duke Ernest) was interred by his own desire without a coffin in a plain military uniform. The Intendant of the Gardens, M. Iverbeck, who has the care of the Island and keeps the key of the little floating bridge by which you pass over the lake to it, showed us every attention, and refused to receive the slightest pecuniary remuneration, saying he was delighted to see English visitors, and as he proved himself perfectly disinterested, we had no right to doubt his sincerity. He has displayed great taste in the decoration of this interesting spot. Duke Augustus was very fond of flowers, and therefore the most beautiful wave over him. Duke Frederick was an enthusiastic admirer of Italy, and his grave is ornamented with flowers of that country. Duke Ernest II. (their father), whose memory is universally respected in Gotha, loved simple, unsophisticated nature, and ac-

cordingly his grave is covered with luxuriant creeping plants, with wild rose-bushes at each corner, and a fragile tree that seems to spring furtively up from the centre. He had an idea that the sooner the body became dust, the sooner would 'corruption put on incorruption,' and the soul rejoin the body in its new and purified state. His wife, the Dowager Duchess, is still living, and an album is kept for her inspection on the Island, in which strangers are requested to inscribe their names, an invitation we of course readily complied with."

At the time this was written, the reigning Duke of Saxe Coburg Gotha was Ernest Antoine Charles Louis, father of the present Duke and of the lamented Prince Consort.

Eisenach, and the Wartburg, wherein Luther found a refuge, (and in a chamber of which I was shown some very fine mounted cap-à-pie suits of the 16th century with complete armour for the horses). One is absurdly said to have belonged to Albert Landgraf of Thuringia, who died in 1314, and another still more ridiculously to "Cunigunda seine gemahlin!" The same preposterous kind of appropriation attends a suit labelled Agnes, wife of Frederick, Landgraf of Thuringia. The suit which bears his name must have belonged to a man almost of gigantic stature. Amongst the

other most particular suits were those appropriated to:

Henry II., King of France, a finely gilt and engraved suit.
John, Duke of Saxe-Weimar (1570-1605).
John Ernest, Duke of Saxony (a boy's suit).
Heinrich Raspon, Landgraf of Thuringia.
Ludwig IV., Landgraf of Thuringia (the horse-armour, an imitation of the slashed dresses of the 16th century).
Herman I., Landgraf of Thuringia.
Ludwig of Eisenach, Landgraf of Thuringia.
Heinrich der Erbarlechte (painted blue).
Feige von Bomssen. Ritter.
Pope Julius II.

Both these latter suits are curiously embossed and engraved.

I have given the names of the personages to whom the above suits are ascribed as they were given to me, but to prevent any one being misled by them, I beg to say that they are nearly all apocryphal. Ludwig of Eisenach lived in the 12th century; Herman I., Ludwig IV., and Heinrich Raspon, Landgraves of Thuringia, were contemporaries of our kings John and Henry III., and Albert and Frederick lived in the reign of our Edward I., two hundred years before any of the armour in the Castle of Wartburg was manufactured. It is lamentable to think what interesting information has been lost to the world by this most reprehensible practice of ascribing suits of armour, weapons, and other relics of bygone ages to popular historical

personages who could never have set eyes upon them, while the names of their real owners are buried in oblivion. The mischief done in an educational point of view is still more deplorable. Pope Julius II. certainly wore armour at the siege of Mirandola in 1511, and if the suit to which his name was attached did really belong to him, it would be one of the most interesting in Europe. It would be curious to ascertain what authority there is for the story, and by what means the armour found its way into Eisenach. From thence to Fulda, Hanau, and Frankfort; whence after a quiet sojourn of a few days we drove to Mayence, and hiring a boat with two watermen leisurely dropped down the Rhine to Cologne, landing to dine and sleep where we fancied, and paying "en passant" a visit to Ferdinand Reis, the eminent composer, at his pretty country house at Godesberg, near Bonn. From Cologne we travelled again by land to Gueldres and Cleves, thence again by water to Rotterdam, and after a short tour through Holland, during which we visited Brock, the emporium of *bric-a-brac*, altogether, perhaps, the most singular village in Europe, and Saardam (or Saandam, as it is more correctly called), the scene of my old favourite "Bourgemestre," recently revived at the "Gaiety," in the operatic form given to it by "Lortzing," returned to England viâ Antwerp

and Calais. The result of this trip being, as far as the public was concerned, the two first parts of "The Lays and Legends of the Rhine," the music of which was composed by Bishop; and the illustrative views drawn on stone by the then unknown but now celebrated Louis Haghe from sketches principally made by me on the spot, and the work dedicated by permission to Sir Walter Scott.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE publication of a little oriental tale, in verse, entitled "Shere Afkun, a Legend of Hindostan," in 1823, had brought me into frequent communication with Mr. Andrews, the bookseller, of Bond Street, who had also published the earliest effusion of Mrs. Charles Gore, who in after-life often alluded to the circumstance. He now projected a monthly serial, to be called "The Album," of which Mr. Robert Sulivan, brother-in-law of the late Sir Edmund Filmer, and subsequently better known to the public as the author of the comedies, "A Beggar on Horseback," produced at the Haymarket, and "The King's Friend," at Sadler's Wells, was appointed editor. "The Album" was not long-lived; but Sulivan and I became great friends, and at his pleasant house at Ashford, near Staines, I, my wife and children, were constant guests for many years, meeting Campbell, the Misses Jewsbury, Redgrave and Cope (both now Royal Academicians), and much agreeable and intellectual society. Sulivan was

a most genial and liberal host, and, with all his poetical temperament, as full of frolic as a school-boy—never more happy than when playing "Hare and hounds" with our children, or some absurd but harmless practical joke upon his visitors. I remember his gravely introducing Tom Campbell to some ladies as Tom Cribb the pugilist, and the poet lending himself to the joke, putting on the gloves, and gravely giving his entertainer a lesson, in the conservatory, in the noble art of self-defence. I need scarcely say how relieved and delighted the ladies were when they discovered they had to sit down to dinner with the author of "The Battle of the Baltic," instead of the hero of a hundred prize-fights on Moulsey Hurst or Wormwood Scrubbs.

Of Mary Jane Jewsbury, for whose loss Wordsworth grieved "as for a shining light gone out," and of whom Felicia Hemans, who wore mourning for her, wrote—"She was taken away in the very prime of her intellectual life, when every moment seemed fraught with new treasures of knowledge and power"* —I possess an interesting relic, in some verses, of which she kindly sent me a copy, "as a slight memorial of the three pleasant days she was domesticated with Mr. Planché at Ashford."

They are dated May 20, 1830. In 1832 she married

* "Book of Memories," by S. C. Hall.

the Rev. W. K. Fletcher, one of the Chaplains of the Honourable East India Company, and died of cholera on her way to Poonah, on the 4th of October, 1833.

The verses may or may not have been printed; but, after forty years, they will be new to many, and acceptable to all.

SONG.

With thine image in mine eye,
And thy beauty in my heart,
I could deem thee passing by,
Spring to meet thee—then I start,
And only see the shadow
Of many a woodland bough,
Wave dark upon the meadow
Where the golden wild flowers grow.

Thy loved voice my heart and mind
So haunteth with its tone,
Oft I hear thee—and then find
The deceiving voice my own!
And only hear the zephyr
Sing to his forest lute,
Or the soft flow of some river,
When that zephyr's song is mute.

Thou art but in seeming near,
Thou art very far away,
But a dream—a thought—a tear,
Bears thee to me night and day.
And the solid field and mountain
Not more stable are to me,
Not more real, sky and fountain,
Than my spirit's dream of thee.

M. J. JEWSBURY.

In the words of our mutual friend, poor Lætitia Landon—and they would be equally applicable to herself—"she died too soon! What noble aspirings, what generous enthusiasm, what kindly emotions, went down to the grave with her unfulfilled destiny." Her younger sister, Geraldine, a partaker of her genius, I am thankful to say still lives, my near neighbour and esteemed friend. At Andrews' table —he prided himself, and with reason, on its excellence —I frequently met, amongst other literary luminaries, Washington Irving—the least American of Americans I ever encountered. He was not brilliant in conversation; but good sense, as well as good nature, made him a most agreeable companion. I do not remember any particular *mot;* but he was a great admirer of Shakespere, and had little respect for his commentators, whom he compared to a pack of hungry dogs quarrelling under the table for dry bones.

Our Amphitryon, the said John Andrews, was exceedingly corpulent, and upon one occasion had a severe attack of illness, which nearly proved fatal. On his recovery he received, by post, the following lines:—

"By an illness, much worse than he e'er had before,
Poor Andrews, they say, has been brought to death's door,
But danger there's none, unless he should grow thin,
For Death hasn't a door that would now let him in."

One of the results of my acquaintance with Laporte was my introduction to the Haymarket Theatre, then under the sole direction of its proprietor, Mr. David Morris, who had engaged that pleasant French comedian to perform in English, which he spoke fluently and with very little accent. He had already made his *début* on our national stage at Drury Lane, in Dryden's comedy "The Two Amphitryons," and had been most favourably received, a slight resemblance to Harley, who played the other Socia, contributing to the effect of the personation.

He made his bow to the Haymarket audience in a one-act farce I adapted for him, from a French vaudeville he selected for the purpose, on the 15th of June, 1827, and I then wrote the operatic comedy called "The Rencontre; or, Love will Find Out the Way," for which my old *collaborateur*, Bishop, composed some exceedingly pretty music, in the execution whereof I had the great advantage of the assistance, for the second time, of a lady to whose almost unparalleled popularity I was subsequently indebted for many of the most gratifying of my successes. I mean of course Madame Vestris, who had previously been of such essential service to me in "Oberon." Upon this occasion also another lady, destined to become a great public favourite, Mrs. Charles Kean (then Miss Ellen

Tree), was included in the cast, which comprised Farren, Cooper, Alexander Lee—a clever composer and an agreeable tenor—and Laporte. Thus supported it would have been hard to fail. The reception of "The Rencontre" was brilliant, and its run, for those days, extraordinary—terminating only with the season.

Mr. David Morris was a great character. A thoroughly honourable gentleman and a shrewd man of business, by no means illiberal in his dealings with authors and actors, and scrupulously punctual in his payments; had Providence added to these very valuable qualifications for a theatrical manager, the talent of theatrical management, he would have been the most perfect specimen of his class in England: but, unhappily, he was lamentably deficient in that one rather important article, and, what was more unfortunate, he was not in the least aware of the deficiency. On the contrary, he prided himself particularly on his managerial abilities, and was extremely surprised at the expression of any doubts, however delicately hinted, of the soundness of his judgment or the accuracy of his taste. Such a delusion is by no means uncommon. An anecdote or two will enable the reader to form a tolerably fair estimate of his capacity for the position which had been previously held by Macklin, Samuel

Foote, and the two Colmans. Fulfilling faithfully all his own obligations, he expected, justly enough, equal rectitude on the part of others. Observing, one morning at the rehearsal of some music, that one of the band was quiescent, he leant over from the pit in which he was standing, and touched him on the shoulder—"Why are you not playing, sir?"—"I have twelve bars rest, sir," answered the musician. "Rest! Don't talk to me about rest, sir! Don't you get your salary, sir? I pay you to play and not to rest, sir! Rest when you've done your work, and not in the middle of it!"*

Alexander Lee, who had the musical direction of the Haymarket the following season—when my "Green-Eyed Monster" was produced, complained to him of the unsatisfactory state of the orchestra. "Unsatisfactory! Pray what fault have you to find with my orchestra?" Every man having been engaged by himself he considered the attack personal. "Some of the principal members are extremely inefficient." "Name one, sir!"—"Well, there is Mr. —— the first clarionet—really of no use at all." "Mr. ——! Do you know who he is, sir?

* A similar story is told about old Astley, and there is no reason why both should not be true. "Great wits jump," they say, and it may be equally true of the reverse.

Are you aware that he was for more than twenty years first clarionet at His Majesty's Theatre?" It was quite true, and naturally the poor old gentleman had scarcely any breath left in his body.

It was one of the absurd ideas of managers in general at that period that the stage should never be unoccupied; and Mr. Morris was especially a martinet in this matter. If he found no one upon it after the clock had struck eleven at the latest, he would immediately cause a rehearsal to be called of something, no matter what. He paid his people, and he was determined they should earn their money. So the poor stage-manager had a pleasant time of it. Tom Dibdin, one of the sons of the celebrated nautical poet, and himself the author of many popular dramatic pieces, held that responsible position at the Haymarket in 1823, and had engaged to write a comedy for that theatre. Some weeks having elapsed, and no portion of it being forthcoming, Morris attacked him one day as he was coming through the box-office. "Mr. Dibdin! Where is the comedy you promised me?"—"My dear sir, what opportunity have I for writing? I am on the stage all day from ten or eleven in the morning till four in the afternoon. Run home to my dinner, and back again to see the curtain up, and remain till it finally falls, long after midnight. I never have any time

for composition." "No time! What do you do on Sundays?"

It would require a larger amount of stupidity than could be reasonably expected in the direction of a theatre, notwithstanding the sublime examples of folly and infatuation which have been exhibited in more than one establishment during the last fifty years, utterly to destroy the prestige of "the little Theatre in the Haymarket." If anyone could have done it, I sincerely believe that most respectable, highly honourable, rather consequential and perfectly self-satisfied little old gentleman, Mr. David Morris, was the man; but neither the production of dull melodramas, which made John Poole button up his coat and answer, when I asked him one night how he felt—"I feel as if I had to walk three miles over the fields home from a country barn," nor the astounding feat of engaging old Mr. D'Egville and a score of very ordinary, clumsy ballet-girls, in rivalry of the Terpsichorean triumphs at "His Majesty's Theatre" over the way, could quite empty the benches of the most permanently popular theatre that ever existed in the metropolis. Much as Mr. Morris's mistakes were to be deplored for his own sake, as well as for that of the drama, there was always, as there is still, and I trust ever will be, a good working company of legitimate actors, comprising some of the greatest Lon-

don favourites, and any temporary retrogression was speedily remedied by the revival of one of our sterling old comedies, or the fortunate production of a new one by Poole or Kenny, such as "Paul Pry," "Sweethearts and Wives," and similar memorable examples of what was acknowledged "good Haymarket commodity."

And here let me say a word or two respecting the above-mentioned popular dramatists, who had worthily won their spurs long before I entered the lists. They were equally witty; but in Poole's wit there was too frequently a mixture of gall, while Kenny's never left a taste of bitterness behind it. I appreciated Poole's talent, but I loved Kenny. The former was, perhaps, the most humorous as well as the most satirical; the latter more refined and more genial. Dining one day where the host became exceedingly excited and angry at not being able to find any stuffing in a roasted leg of pork, Poole quietly suggested, "Perhaps it is in *the other leg.*" Dining in his company on another occasion, the conversation turned on the comedy of "The School for Scandal." A city knight who was present inquired, "Who wrote 'The School for Scandal?'" Poole, with the greatest *sang froid*, and a glance of infinite contempt, replied, "Miss Chambers, the banker's daughter." "Ah! indeed," said Sir J——, "clever

girl! *very* clever girl!" Almost immediately afterwards, Poole said, "Pray, Sir J——, are you a knight bachelor or a knight errant?" "Well now—I really can't say—I don't think I ever was asked that question. I'll make it a point to inquire." It was as good as a play to watch Poole's countenance, but I confess his audacity made me shiver.

Kenny would have had too much respect for the friend he was dining with, to have shown up one of his guests so unmercifully. I do not remember his saying a severe thing of or to anyone. Even in moments of irritation he would give a graceful turn to his reproof, One evening when I was playing whist with him at his own house, Mrs. Kenny burst suddenly into the room, followed by three or four ladies who had been dining with us, all in fits of laughter at some ludicrous incident that had occurred, and startled Kenny (a very nervous man), so greatly that he let drop some of his cards, and exclaimed "Is—*Heaven* broke loose?"

Several changes occurred about this period (1827) in the theatrical world. Elliston had been ruined at Drury Lane, having paid the Committee for rent during his seven years' occupation £65,000 out of £71,000, besides expending nearly £30,000 in rebuilding, improving, and decorating their property.

He retreated "pour mieux sauter," as he trusted, to

the Royal Circus, re-christened the Surrey Theatre, Mr. Stephen Price (an American manager) becoming the lessee of old Drury at a rental of equal magnitude. I told George Robins, the well-known auctioneer and the Magnus Apollo of Drury Lane at that period, that the enormous rent the committee was screwing out of their lessees rendered any chance of enduring success hopeless, and that in a few years I should see the theatre to let without a bidder for it. He laughed me to scorn: but I was too true a prophet; I did see it.

Glossop had been ruined at the Coburg, and the theatre had passed into the hands of a Mr. Osbaldiston. Previous to the change, however, I heard two criticisms from the gallery there, from which a tolerably accurate idea of the causes of failure in this case may I think fairly be drawn. The first was the rebuke of an indignant deity, who, during the performance of a wretchedly-written melodrama, most carelessly represented, exclaimed, "We don't expect no grammar, but you might let the scenes meet!" The other was on the occasion of the first exhibition of an enormous looking-glass curtain or act drop, the advent of which had been announced in the largest type for many weeks, and had been confidently counted upon as an immense attraction. The house was certainly crowded the first night, and I was amongst the number of the curious, if not of the

sanguine spectators. After an overture, to which no attention of course was paid by the excited and impatient audience, the promised novelty was duly displayed; not one entire plate of glass—that could not have been expected—but composed of a considerable number of moderately-sized plates—I have seen larger in some shop-windows—within an elaborately gilt frame. The effect was anything but agreeable. The glass was all over finger or other marks, and dimly reflected the two tiers of boxes and their occupants. It was no imposition, however, it was a large mass of plate-glass, and in those days must have cost a great deal of money. There was consequently considerable applause at its appearance. The moment it ceased, some one in the gallery, possessing a stentorian voice, called out, "That's all werry well! Now show us summut else!" What more cutting commentary could the keenest wit have made upon this costly folly? Did the manager who was guilty of it deserve to succeed?

I retain one recollection of this theatre which is really interesting. I was much struck one evening by the admirable painting of the interior of a Swiss cottage with a wooden gallery and staircase, and meeting Glossop in the lobby between the acts of the piece—the title of which has escaped me—I complimented

him on the possession of so good an artist, and inquired his name. "That scene," he replied, "was painted by two boys. Come behind with me, and you shall see them: they will be pleased with your praise." I followed him, and on the stage saw two lads playing at leap-frog. Those were the painters. I was introduced to them. The name of the youngest was Charles Tomkins; the other's name was Clarkson Stanfield.

Tomkins migrated to the Adelphi, where he attained considerable reputation, but was unfortunately compelled to relinquish his profession, in 1838, from the effects of a sunstroke, and died shortly afterwards in the prime of life. Of my old friend Stanfield's career it is unnecessary for me to speak. His greatest works in oil are happily preserved to us; but it is painful to think how many of his exquisite pictures have necessarily gone the way of all stage scenery—what moonlit lakes and sunny seas have been painted out; what "cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces" used up, and left "not a wreck behind!" The name of Stanfield naturally recalls that of another great scenic artist, his gifted contemporary and fellow Royal Academician, David Roberts, who also in the painting-room of Drury Lane first developed that genius, which

speedily obtained for him the highest honours in his profession.

My acquaintance, by this time, had vastly increased in various circles of society. My intimacy with the Kembles had naturally led to a knowledge of their relatives and visitors: Mr. and (the first) Mrs. Horace Twiss, Mrs. Arkwright, whose musical recitation—for it could not strictly be called singing—was marvellous for its expression; Mr. Procter, the poet (better known as Barry Cornwall), and his wife, both of whom I am happy to number amongst my surviving friends; also their most amiable and highly gifted daughter Adelaide, too early lost, but who has left us imperishable proofs of her genius and exquisite sensibility; and the late Rev. William Harness (the school-fellow for whom Byron fought at Harrow), one of the best and kindest of men, but recently, by a sad accident, taken from us.

My general literary and antiquarian pursuits brought me into communion with some of the most eminent authors and archæologists of the day; and at the *conversazioni* of Mr. Pettigrew, the Egyptian antiquary, in Saville Row, the breakfasts of John Britton, the architect, who had always an encouraging word and a helping hand for rising youth or struggling age, the *soirées* at Sir Charles and Lady Morgan's, and the receptions of other private friends, I met, and was introduced to

most of the notabilities then living in London. Amongst the most interesting were the two great orientalists, Sir Gore Ousely and Sir Robert Kerr Porter, Sir Robert's accomplished sisters, Jane and Anna Maria Porter, authors of those popular novels, "The Scottish Chiefs," and "Thaddeus of Warsaw;" Haynes Bayly and Samuel Lover, the songsters of society; Mrs. Opie, the most charming of "Friends;" and her connexion, Peyronet Briggs, R.A., the historical painter; Miss Agnes Strickland, Miss Pardoe, Mrs. Jameson, G. P. R. James, Colley Grattan, and Francis Mahony, *alias* Father Prout.

Unworthy of ranking amongst the above-named eminent persons, yet perhaps one of the most extraordinary characters of that period, moving particularly in literary and theatrical circles, was a man known familiarly as Tommy Hill. He might have sat to Mrs. Centlivre for the portrait of Marplot in "The Busy Body," and if not the original of Poole's "Paul Pry," which Poole always denied, though nobody believed him, he certainly sat for the portrait of Mr. Hull, in Theodore Hook's novel "Gilbert Gurney." He knew, or was supposed to know, everything about everybody, and was asked to dine everywhere in order that he might tell it. Scandal was, of course, the great staple of his conversation; but in general defamatory gossip

he might have been equalled by too many. His *specialité* was the accurate information he could impart to those whom it concerned, or whom it did not concern, of all the petty details of the domestic economy of his *friends,* the contents of their wardrobes, their pantries, the number of pots of preserves in their store-closets, and of table napkins in their linen-presses, the dates of their births and marriages, the amounts of their tradesmen's bills, and whether they paid them weekly or quarterly, or when they could—and he always "happened to know," and never failed to inform you when they couldn't. He had been "on the Press" in former times, and particularly connected with the "Morning Chronicle," and used to drive Mathews crazy by ferreting out his whereabouts whenever he left London, though but for a short private visit, popping the address in some paper, and causing his letters to be sent to houses after he had left them, sometimes to the obstruction of business, and always to the doubling of postage—no small matter in those days.

But while so communicative respecting others, he was rigidly reticent with regard to himself. Nobody knew when or where he was born, or could form the slightest conjecture respecting his age or connections. Fawcett and Farley, and others still more advanced in years, remembered finding him established in London

when they entered it as young men, looking much the same as he did when I knew him, and no one had ever been able to elicit from him the least morsel of evidence that would lead them to a probable conclusion. This was the cause of much amusing banter amongst his acquaintances, who used to ask him questions concerning the Norman Conquest, the Spanish Armada, and other ancient historical events, which they insisted he must have been contemporary with; and some one, less extravagantly, identified him with a Mr. Thomas Hill, who is mentioned by Pepys in his Diary, as giving musical parties in the City in the reign of Charles II. He bore all this with the greatest equanimity, and was never observed to wince but upon two occasions; once when Theodore Hook declared that Tommy had stood godfather to old Mrs. Davenport, which was just within the bounds of possibility, and again when Charles Dance maintained that it was quite clear Hill could not have been, as reported, in the ark with Noah, because the animals were all in pairs, and there never was another beast of Tommy's kind.

It was surely his thus being the cause of wit in others that occasioned him to be so constantly the guest of many of the most brilliant men of the time; for he was certainly not witty himself, and I will not do them the injustice to believe that the extremely small tittle-tattle

of which he was the ceaseless retailer could have had any particular attraction for them, although it occasionally provoked laughter from its contemptible triviality. I never heard any one express the least regard for him while living, or regret for him when he died; for I believe, but would by no means affirm, that he *is* dead, and "kills characters no longer."

CHAPTER IX.

In the autumn of 1827 I had a little windfall in the acceptable shape of a few hundreds, which I recovered from the estate of a lady to whom I was next of kin, but had never set eyes on in my life, and am at this moment in ignorance of the precise twig of the family tree from which she did us the favour to spring. All I know is, that she was the widow of an American gentleman of the name of Bonsal, and lived at Charleston, South Carolina, U. S. ("American papers please copy.") Previous to the war with America in 1815* she was in frequent communication with my father, and always requested him to keep her letters, as "James" was her *only* blood relation. She could not, therefore, have been a Planché, as of that illustrious race I, the said James, was by no means the sole

* From a book entitled "Vincent Nolte's Life in Two Hemispheres," I learned that a Major Planché, an American, commanded the Rifles at the Siege of New Orleans, in that year. He lived to be a General, and died there at a very advanced age. I entered into correspondence with his family; but could not trace any connection with mine.

existing specimen at that period. I, therefore, presume Mrs. Bonsal must have hailed from the Teutonic stock on which we were grafted, and was in both senses of the word my cousin *German*. On the renewal of amicable relations between the two countries I made several vain attempts (my father being dead) to learn some tidings of my relation. Dowton, the actor, who had made a professional tour through the States, had seen and personally known the old lady in Charleston before he knew me, and described her as of goodly presence and highly respectable position. At length, through the medium of Mr. Miller, the theatrical bookseller of Bow Street, Covent Garden, who had business communications with the United States, I ascertained that she was dead, had left no will, and that her property was claimed by the family of her deceased husband. I was just in time to put in my claim as heir-at-law, grounded on the letters aforesaid, and being offered the choice of a moiety or a chancery suit, by the advice, improbable as it may seem, of my lawyer, I accepted the former, and in due course received a remittance of something short of a thousand pounds, with an intimation of more to follow.

Thereupon I proposed to treat myself to another tour in Germany; and Mrs. Planché being in too

delicate a state of health at that moment to travel, I started on the 15th of August for Vienna, accompanied by a gentleman, whose acquaintance I had but recently made, but with whom I contracted a friendship which terminated only with his death in 1858. Our route was upon this occasion by Ostend to the Rhine, which we quitted at Coblentz for the banks of the Lahn, visiting all the baths, from Ems to Wiesbaden; thence by Franckfort and Aschaffenburgh, through the grand forest scenery of the Spessart, to Wurtzburg.

Whilst discussing in the *spiese saal* of the hotel "La Cour de Bavierre," the inevitable veal chop and a bottle of the famous wine which is grown upon the hill crowned by the citadel, a portly personage made his appearance, attired in a grass-green frock-coat, a white waistcoat, and nankeen trousers. A white hat, with green lining to the brim, surmounted a profusion of tow-coloured, or no-coloured hair, which fell in curls on his broad shoulders, and his closely-shaven face had the "shining morning" glow of a fresh-scrubbed schoolboy. When, years afterwards, I read Wilkie Collins' exciting novel, "The Woman in White," I seemed to recognize an old acquaintance in the admirably-drawn character of Fosco. This remarkable individual seated himself, with a benevolent

smile at our table, and courteously, but rather familiarly, accosted us in French. "We were English?" "Yes." Was this our first visit to Wurtzburg? It was. He should have great pleasure in showing us the city. And, somehow or another, we had scarcely concluded our luncheon when, without having actually accepted his offer, we found ourselves in his—I might almost say—custody. I myself, indeed, was literally his captive, for, passing his left arm under my right, as we issued from the hotel, he grasped my wrist firmly in his capacious palm and then led me along, wheeling me round suddenly and swiftly when we arrived at any object he thought worthy our attention. Prospect, building, or monument, he raised his right hand towards it, uttering invariably the single word "Comment?" and before it was possible to express an opinion in reply to that note of interrogation, down came the ponderous paw, like a sledge hammer, upon my imprisoned arm, accompanied by the exclamation, "C'est superb!" I need scarcely say that the repetition of this evolution at about every hundred yards became, in the course of half an hour, anything but agreeable, more particularly as I detected a smile of malicious amusement on the countenance of my more fortunate companion at every recurrence of the infliction. A happy thought occurred to me.

Upon the next "right about face," at the same instant that he said, "Comment?" I exclaimed, "C'est superb!" The anticipation had the effect of arresting for a few seconds the descent of the paw; but though surprised, he was not to be defeated. Down it came with the same force on the same place, with the verbal variation of "C'est le mot!"

"To bear is to conquer our fate," as the Bard of Hope has philosophically sung, so I endured mine stoically during the remainder of our promenade. He was certainly a capital guide, and evidently well known to the good folks of Wurtzburg—civil, military, and official. In the Palace Gardens a respectably-dressed young man was seated on a bench, reading a book. As we were passing him our fat friend coolly took it out of his hand, with the question, "Vas lezen sie?" ("What are you reading?") and having satisfied his curiosity by a glance at the title-page, returned it to him with a polite bow, receiving one as polite in exchange from the person whose studies he had so unceremoniously interrupted. Through the gates, up the grand marble staircase, and through the state apartments of the palace we passed, unchallenged by sentinels, unquestioned by servants. No one spoke to him, or interfered in any way with his movements or descriptions, and I have no doubt

we saw more in two hours under his direction than we could have done in a day if left to our own devices. After conducting my companion through the Lunatic Asylum—an excellent establishment, with an inspection of the exterior of which, however, I was perfectly contented, and enjoyed meanwhile the release of my arm from the pounding it had undergone—our mysterious friend took leave of us with the same familiar courtesy that had characterised all his proceedings, neither demanding nor apparently expecting any remuneration for his trouble, being, no doubt, sufficiently paid for it by the police, of which it was subsequently hinted to us by our host he was a secret agent. They manage these matters extremely well in Germany, as we had afterwards more than one opportunity of observing.

From Wurtzburg we journeyed by diligence to Nuremberg, the city of Albert Durer, and worthy of being the birthplace of such an artist. There we hired a carriage to take us to Regensburg (Ratisbon), the tidings of which arrangement having reached the ears of a learned professor sojourning in the hotel, and who was desirous of migrating to the said city, his wish was communicated to us by the waiter while we were at dinner, with a request that we would allow the learned gentleman to share our

conveyance, he paying his proportion of the expenses *bien entendu*. We consented, and were consequently favoured with his company for two days, during which, as he spoke nothing but German, of which our knowledge was exceedingly limited, we were not compensated by any particularly amusing or interesting conversation, for his total forgetfulness to settle his account with us on arriving at the end of our journey. The herr professor was most probably not overburdened with cash, and we would have willingly *given* him a lift; but it is disagreeable to feel *done* out of sixpence—*à tout pecheur misericorde.*

At Ratisbon we hired a flat-bottomed boat of peculiar construction, called a Weitz-ziller, used to descend the Danube in those days, when no steamer had ever profaned that romantic river. This singular-looking craft was forty feet in length, and composed of deal planks quite rough and rudely nailed together, the ribs being natural branches, and in the centre a kind of hut of the same materials. It was, in fact, little more than a large rude punt, rowed by two men with long paddles tied to upright posts, and steered by a third with a similar paddle. For boat and men we paid something less than ten pounds in English money, with an understanding that they were to land us at Vienna in the course of four days.

My account of this little voyage was published in an octavo volume, entitled "The Descent of the Danube," shortly after my return; and ample quotations from it will be found in Mr. Murray's "Handbook for Southern Germany." For though he declined taking the book, which I offered first to him, he paid me the compliment of borrowing pretty considerably from it as soon as it was published. Consequently, as no very remarkable adventure occurred to us during the descent, I will spare the reader of these "Recollections" the repetition of descriptions of scenery which, forty-three years ago, possessed the charm of novelty for the majority of English travellers, but is now—though not so familiar as that of the Rhine—sufficiently well-known to the general public.

Two questions were eagerly asked wherever we landed: "Was the Thames Tunnel finished?" "Was Mr. Canning dead?" Alas! that we had to answer "Yes" to the second. He had died some three weeks before we started; and a farce of mine, most unfortunately named "You must be Buried," was produced at the Haymarket on the 11th of August, a few days previous to his funeral. It was simply a free translation of "La Veuve de Malabar," sent to me by Laporte to do for him; and there was not a word in its one short act to give offence, or which

could possibly be twisted into any allusion to the serious loss the nation was lamenting; but, as ill-luck would have it, John Reeve, who played a principal part in it, was more imperfect than usual, and being, as usual, *Bacchi plenus*, indulged in such vulgar and revolting ribaldry of his own introduction—technically called "gag"—that the audience, already prejudiced by the *mal-à-propos* title, became justly incensed, and hissed the piece furiously. It lingered on the stage for a few nights, and was then, in obedience to its prophetic appellation, consigned to the tomb of all the Capulets.

A version of the same piece, at a more fortunate period, was successfully produced at Drury Lane by Kenney, and still keeps the stage under the improved title of "The Illustrious Stranger." The same subject has recently also been used for a burlesque by Mr. Robert Reece, called "Brown and the Brahmins."

I was present at the funeral of Mr. Canning in Westminster Abbey, and remember the extraordinary effect produced by the remarkable likeness of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who was one of the mourners, to the eminent statesman whose remains were being borne before him. It was as though the spirit of the departed was regretfully following the tenement of clay from which it had been so suddenly ejected.

But to return to Vienna, where we were duly landed,

according to contract, on the fourth day after leaving Ratisbon. On landing, we were most politely invited by an officer in full uniform to walk in and take our seats in his private apartments, while our baggage was being brought on shore, and a vehicle obtained to take us to our hotel; "Die Kaiserin Von Oestreich," which he specially recommended to us. After a very agreeable chat with him, on all sorts of subjects, our passports having been pronounced "en regle," and our carriage arrived, we parted with mutual and repeated salutations, feeling quite grateful for the information he had favoured us with, so valuable, as my companion observed to two foreigners, who had for the first time visited Vienna! As he made this remark we both seemed suddenly to recollect our fat friend at Wurtzburg, and felt that we had fairly balanced the obligation, by giving our polite host all the information respecting ourselves that the police could possibly desire to become possessed of.

The young Duke of Reichstadt (Napoleon II., as he has since been styled) was then residing in the palace of Schönbrun. We were shown his apartments, but did not catch a glimpse of the prince himself. We saw everything else that was to be seen; made an excursion to Laxembourg (the Wilhelmshöe of Vienna), the lovely Hellenthal, and the

Brühl, a romantic gorge in the mountains of the Wiener Wald; and after a brief but pleasant sojourn in the capital of Austria, proceeded by Salzburg to Munich, from thence to Lindau, the Lake of Constance, Schaffhausen, and the Falls of the Rhine, through the Black Forest to Basle, crossed the Vosges, sleeping at the little village of St. Maurice on the summit, where we hopped over the Moselle at its source, and then by Nancy to Paris, where I heard Scribe and Auber's charming opera "Le Philtre," on the libretto of which Donizetti founded his "Elisire d'Amore" and saw the ballet of "La Somnambule," with Montessu for the heroine, the subject of which was afterwards converted into an opera for Bellini.

I returned to London, to find my "Rencontre" still drawing good houses at the Haymarket, and to commence work for the coming season at Covent Garden; to the stage of which I had the pleasure of restoring (Feb. 5th, 1828) another of our fine old comedies, "The City Match," by Jasper Mayne, first acted in 1639, with some additions from Rowley's "Match at Midnight;" the title of my arrangement being "The Merchant's Wedding." His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence was present on its first performance, and was so much pleased with it, that I received his permission to dedicate the play, on publication, to him.

My friendly connection with Covent Garden Theatre was, however, destined to be temporarily suspended. With Mr. Charles Kemble I should never have had any disagreement; but, unfortunately, he had two partners. One of them, it is true, was a quiet person who seldom spoke, though probably, like the Welshman's parrot, "he thought the more;" but the other was a "rude and boisterous captain of the sea," who, utterly destitute of literary taste, and ignorant of theatrical usage, imagined a play-house could be managed like a ship, and everybody "on board" treated as the crew of it. If the greatest actor in the company was too ill to play his part, he would say, "Let another fellow do it!" perfectly indifferent as to whether the "other fellow" could; or if he refused one he was asked to play, he would have ordered him a round dozen, had it been in his power to enforce the punishment. "He'd flog Charles Young!" growled Fawcett one day to me. "I know he would if he could!—he'd positively flog Charles Young!" I rarely came in contact with this gentleman: but after Easter the business declined, and some difficulty was found in meeting the manager's engagements. Mr. Kemble never interfered in the financial arrangements of the theatre; and I was, therefore, compelled to have an interview with "the officer in command" of the treasury; whose discourtesy was

so gross, that I declined any further communication with him, and left him to be brought to book by my solicitor. Of course I withdrew myself, though with much reluctance, from a theatre to which I had become so much attached that I had repeatedly declined most tempting offers to write for the rival establishment; and, after producing "A Daughter to Marry" and "The Green-eyed Monster" at the Haymarket during the summer, and "The Mason of Buda" at the Adelphi in October, I accepted the renewed offer of Mr. Stephen Price, and set to work once more for Old Drury.

On the 11th of November, 1828 (the anniversary, as it happened, of the death of its eccentric hero), my drama "Charles XIIth" was brought out at that theatre with remarkable success: Farren looking and acting the Swedish monarch to perfection, and Liston taking the house by storm in the character of Adam Brock, which had been considered by the management quite out of his line, but which he had taken to eagerly and played so admirably that, as he was constantly in the habit of declaring, "I had given him the opportunity of making a new reputation." My old friend, and dramatic father, as he used to call himself, John Harley, made an amusing Muddlework, a part which, in the theatre, was thought should have been Liston's; and Miss Ellen Tree as Ulrica, and Miss Love, with the ballad

of "Rise, gentle Moon," composed for her by John Barnet, contributed to secure for the piece a popularity which it enjoys to the present day.

On the morning after its fiftieth representation my wife received a very handsome silver tea-service, with a note from Mr. Price, begging her acceptance of it, "as a small acknowledgment of the great success of 'Charles XIIth.'"

A far greater benefit, not to me alone, but to English dramatic authors in general, resulted ultimately from this "great success." The piece not being printed and published, which, at that period, would have entitled any manager to perform it without the author's permission, Mr. Murray, of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, wrote to inquire upon what terms I would allow him to produce it. I named the very moderate sum of ten pounds, which he admitted I was perfectly justified in asking, but declined paying, on the plea that since the introduction of half-price in the provinces, the expenses attendant on the production of afterpieces was barely covered by the receipt they brought. This was all very well; but Mr. Murray had the dishonesty to obtain surreptitiously a MS. copy of the piece, and the effrontery, in the face of the above excuse, to produce the piece, without my permission, at *whole price*.

leaving me to my remedy. I did not bring an action against him, but I asked Poole, Kenny, Lunn, Peake, and some others of the working dramatists of the day to dine with me in Brompton Crescent and talk the matter over; and it was agreed that steps should be immediately taken to obtain the protection of an Act of Parliament. I accordingly called on the Hon. George Lamb at Melbourne House, and he kindly consented to bring in a bill for that purpose. He did so, but was unable to get it through the third reading. Mr. Lytton Bulwer, now Lord Lytton, then took it in hand, and succeeded in carrying the measure through both Houses. It received the Royal assent June 10, 1833 (3rd of William IV.), and though, from the difficulties of enforcing it against managers who are unprincipled enough to resort to any means by which they can evade payment, it does not enable the author to—

"sit at ease,
Under the shade of his own laurel trees,"

as was more poetically than truthfully stated in the prologue to his Lordship's play, "The Duchess de La Vallière," it must be thankfully acknowledged that it has greatly improved the dramatic writer's position, by giving him an indisputable control over his own property; and managers have to thank the unworthy con-

duct of one, who was considered the most respectable of their fraternity, for the existence of the first Dramatic Authors' Act. I reserve some remarks and reflections on the working of this Act for a subsequent chapter. I have anticipated events for some years, and must return to the date I have strayed from.

CHAPTER X.

In the summer of 1829 I had the opportunity of treating the subject of "The Vampire" in accordance with my own ideas of propriety. The French melodrama had been converted into an opera for the German stage, and the music composed by Marschner.

Mr. Hawes, who had obtained a score of it, having induced Mr. Arnold to produce it at the Lyceum, I was engaged to write the libretto, and consequently laid the scene of action in Hungary, where the superstition exists to this day, substituted for a Scotch chieftain a Wallachian Boyard, and in many other respects improved upon my earlier version. The opera was extremely well sung, and the costumes novel as well as correct, thanks to the kindness of Dr. Walsh, the traveller,* who gave me some valuable information respecting the national dresses of the Magyars and the Wallachians.

* Rev. Robert Walsh, LL.D., author of "A Residence in Constantinople," and other similar works.

I am surprised that Marschner's most dramatic and melodious works, "Der Vampyr," "Die Judin," &c., have not been introduced to our more advanced musical audiences at one or other of our great operatic establishments.

The production of "Der Vampyr" was followed by that of "The Brigand" at Drury Lane, in which that great melodramatic favourite, James Wallack, increased his popularity so immensely by his performance of the hero, "Alessandro Mazzaroni," that the public would scarcely receive him in Tragedy or Comedy, the leading parts in which he was ambitious of sustaining. This unlooked-for consequence so nettled him, that he has frequently said to me, quite savagely, 'D——n your "Brigand," sir! It has been the ruin of me.' Nevertheless, he was not best pleased with his brother Henry, a very inferior actor, anticipating him in the character all over the country, and advertising himself as "Mr. Wallack of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane," omitting the distinguishing baptismal appellation.

In this melodrama I introduced three tableaux from Eastlake's well-known pictures, "An Italian Brigand Chief reposing," "The Wife of a Brigand Chief watching the result of a Battle," and "The Dying Brigand," engravings of which had been just published by

Messrs. Moon, Boys, & Graves, and were in all the printshop windows. They were very effective, and led to the adoption of this attractive feature in several subsequent dramas, Douglas Jerrold's "Rent Day," founded on Wilkie's celebrated picture, in particular. Perhaps one of the most unexpected hits in the piece was the extraordinary success of the song, "Gentle Zitella," which I wrote for Wallack to sing, who was no singer. Assisted by the situation, he got through it very creditably, and it told well with the audience; but the extraordinary part of the business was the enormous popularity of the song out of the theatre. The late Mr. Chappell, of New Bond Street, who was at that moment in treaty for the purchase of the business of Mr. Latour, had agreed to give, as I was credibly informed, £500 more for it on the strength of the sale of that song alone, which brought him upwards of £1000 the first year, and continued for many to produce a considerable income.

By this bit of good fortune I profited not one shilling. Mr. T. Cooke received £25 for his arrangement of the air (which was mine as well as the words), and some further benefit in the exchange of a piano; but when, on hearing of the wonderful sale of the song, I appealed to Mr. Latour for some recognition, however trifling, of my property in the

work, he referred me to Mr. Chappell, to whom he had sold the business, and who would reap all the profits of the song; and on applying to Mr. Chappell, he assured me that Mr. Latour had exacted so large a sum from him in consideration of the value of that song, that he really could not afford to pay anything more for it. He had bought it of Mr. Latour, and to Mr. Latour I must look for remuneration.

This set me a-thinking. It had been a custom of long standing for an author to allow the composer of his opera to publish the words with the music. They were not considered of any value, and in a literary point of view there might, in too many instances, have been some truth in the assertion. Still, without the words, however poor they might be, the music of a new opera could not be published. That fact never appeared to have occurred to any one, or, if it had, no author had thought it worth his while to moot the question. In those days successful dramas had a certain sale, and there were actually booksellers who would give a very fair price for a new play, and a much larger one for an opera, as the sale of the book of the songs in the house would alone net a sufficient sum to pay the author and the expenses of printing at the least, without reckoning the money taken over the counter for the complete libretto. But those days were fast disappearing, and

booksellers were becoming chary of purchasing the copyrights of any dramatic pieces whatever, unless at such low prices that they were able to publish them in a small size at sixpence or a shilling, instead of, as formerly, in 8vo, at three or five shillings. The lyrical drama also, assuming gradually a more strictly operatic form, "the book of the songs" no longer consisted of a few ballads and duets, a glee and two or three choruses. It contained the greater part of the whole piece, and every word of it was printed and published by the music-seller, without the least compensation to the bookseller who had purchased the copyright of the author. Mr. Miller, Mr. Dolby, and other theatrical booksellers, had paid me fifty, sixty, and a hundred pounds for copyrights, but such offers were "getting few by degrees and beautifully less." Meanwhile, the music-publishers were making large fortunes by the sale of songs for the words of which they had not paid sixpence. The case of "Gentle Zitella," though the most flagrant, was no by means the first. The ballad of "Rise, gentle Moon," in Charles XIIth," had been published by the composer as a matter of course, and had commanded an extensive sale without my receiving the slightest consideration for it. I determined to be the victim of "tyrant custom" no longer, and told George Rodwell, who was just about

to publish the vocal pieces of my operetta, "The Mason of Buda," of which he had arranged the music, that I should expect some payment, I cared not about the amount, provided it was a sufficient recognition of my right as author of the libretto.

My protest was contemptuously disregarded, and the music was published in defiance of it. I walked into the city, not to my lawyer, but to Mr. Cumberland, who was then publishing his "Theatre," explained to him the case, and sold and assigned to him, in due form, all my rights and interests, vested and contingent, in the operetta of "The Mason of Buda."

On my return home, I informed Messrs. D'Almaine & Co. of the step I had taken, and that, as they had declined to deal with me, they would now have to deal with Mr. Cumberland. My letter was speedily followed by one from Mr. Cumberland's solicitor, prohibiting the further sale of the music, and demanding an account. How they compromised matters with Cumberland, I forget, if I ever knew, but I recollect being warmly thanked by my old acquaintance FitzBall, to whom D'Almaine had sent in a great pucker, and paid him for a host of things for which otherwise he would not have received a farthing; and from that time I have been fairly paid by the music-

publishers for the right of printing the words of my operas, without injury to the composers, who commanded the same prices as they did previously. I had the gratification also of feeling in this case, as well as in that of the Dramatic Authors' Act, that I was not simply struggling for my own benefit, but for that of all my extremely ill-treated brethren, whose claims were invariably the last considered by managers or publishers.

The season of 1829—30 brought the managerial career of Mr. Stephen Price at Drury Lane to a disastrous conclusion—an event as much to be deplored for the sake of the public as for his own; for he had catered well and successfully for them, and conducted the theatre with considerable tact and great respectability, and had actually made a little money the second season. But the rent was certain to ruin any lessee in the long run; and the infatuated proprietors continued cutting up the goose that laid them golden eggs till they could find no goose green enough to submit to the operation. Mr. Price was not a highly educated man, nor the possessor of a very refined taste; but he was a straight-forward, sensible man of business, thoroughly understood the practical working of a theatre, having been many years the manager of one of the principal theatres in New York. He

had no favourites but such as experience proved to him were favourites of the public; no prejudices to warp his judgment, and was perfectly free from that common and fatal weakness of managers—the encouragement of talebearers and mischief-makers. He had his likings and his dislikings, as other men; but he never suffered them to bias him in matters of business, never allowed private feeling to influence his conduct to a performer, or affect the interest of the public. At the same time he ruled with a strong hand, and could neither be coaxed nor coerced into taking any step which his natural shrewdness warned him might be hazardous. An eminent tragedian once suggested to him the omission of Locke's music in the tragedy of "Macbeth," as it was an interpolation, the words sung to it being taken from Middleton's "Witch." Price listened attentively to his arguments, and after a few minutes of apparent consideration, said, "Well, look here, sir, I don't think it would do to omit the music; but, if you think it would be an improvement, I've no objection to leave out the Macbeth."

Price was very fond of a rubber, and not more irritable than whist-players in general, when a partner makes a mistake. A gentleman, apologising for an inadvertence by saying, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Price, I thought the queen was out," he replied, I'll

bet you five pounds, sir, you didn't think any such thing."

A Beef-steak Club had been established at Drury Lane, in 1826, in imitation of the original at the English Opera House. The meetings took place in the painting room of the theatre, a portion of which was partitioned off by scenery. The lessee for the time being was the president, and the treasurer of the theatre ("Billy Dunn," as he was familiarly called—a great character) acted in the same capacity, as well as secretary, for the club, having the assistance of a deputy in the collection of the subscriptions, fines, &c., who was Kean's friend John Hughes. I was not a member of the club, but occasionally dined with it as a guest. There was much good fun, as may be imagined, at these dinners, and not a little practical joking. A rather strong example of the latter may be worth recording. By one of the rules of the club the fine of half-a-crown was imposed upon all members using certain expressions or doing certain things most natural and inoffensive, and which, from general and constant custom, it was almost impossible to avoid. One evening the company appeared strangely oblivious or pertinaciously defiant of their regulation. Everybody was fined over and over again, and little Jack Hughes was kept constantly on his legs during the dinner, rushing

from one end of the table to another to collect the half-crowns of the unwary or wilful offenders. Shortly after the cloth was drawn, the messenger of the theatre was sent up by the stage-doorkeeper, to tell Mr. Hughes a gentleman wished to speak with him directly on important business. Hughes followed the messenger down to the hall, and was ushered into the little room on the right of the entrance, used sometimes as a manager's room, and therein found L——, a Bow Street officer, who was perfectly well-known to him. On inquiring the object of his visit, the officer gravely replied that he was extremely sorry to say, having known and respected Mr. Hughes for several years, that an information had been laid against him for the uttering of base coin, and that a warrant had been issued, which it was his painful duty to be the bearer of. Poor little Hughes, conscious of his innocence, was nevertheless horror-struck at the intelligence, and, while indignantly repudiating the charge, implored the officer not to take him into custody, pledging his honour that he would attend at Bow Street the next morning, and meet any accusation that could be brought against him. The officer said it would be at his own peril if he acceded to such a proposition; but having known Mr. Hughes so long, and feeling confident there must be some mistake, he would run the risk, provided Mr. Hughes

would not object to his searching him on the spot. Hughes assented eagerly, little thinking what would follow. In a few minutes the officer was in possession of between two and three dozen of bad half-crowns, which Jack had unsuspiciously stuffed into his pockets as fast as he could take them, without examination. In vain did he offer the easy explanation, and request the officer to go up-stairs with him, or to send for Dunn to corroborate his statement. Under such suspicious circumstances, he was told, he must be locked up for the night, and send for the witnesses in the morning. At this point, however, it was considered that the joke had been carried far enough; and Dunn, the chief conspirator, who had been on the watch, made his appearance and relieved his half-distracted deputy from apprehension of any description. He was a good-natured little fellow, and generously forgave the perpetrators the trick they had played him, which was rather beyond a joke, and even extended his clemency to the Bow Street officer, whose conduct in lending himself to the imposition was highly reprehensible, and, if reported, would have been severely visited.

He was a dry fellow, that Billy Dunn, a great character, as I have already observed. During the many years he was treasurer of Drury Lane I don't suppose he once witnessed a performance;

but regularly after the curtain had fallen on a new piece, it mattered not of what description, he would let himself through with his pass-key from the front of the house, as if he had sat it out, and on being asked his opinion, invariably answer, after a long pause and a proportionate pinch of snuff, "Wants cutting." Nine times out of ten he was right, and if wrong it would have been difficult to prove that he was so, as he never entered into any discussion of the subject. The trouble of extracting a direct reply from him, at any time or concerning anything, was remarkable. I called one morning at the theatre, on my way to the city, to ask him a question about writing orders on some particular night. I was told he was in the treasury, and accordingly ran up to it. He was alone at his desk, counting cheques. "Would there be any objection, Dunn, to my sending a friend or two to the boxes on such a night?" He looked at me, but made no answer, and continued to count his cheques. I waited patiently till he had finished and replaced them in the bags. Still no answer. He turned to his books. I waited perhaps five more minutes, and then, without repeating my inquiry, or speaking another word, walked quietly out of the room and went about my other business. Returning between two and three in the afternoon, I ascertained from

the hall-keeper that Mr. Dunn was still in the theatre. I mounted the stairs again, entered the treasury, and found him, as before, alone. I stood perfectly silent while he looked at me and took the customary pinch of snuff, after which he drawled out, "No, I should think not;" some four hours having elapsed since I asked him the question.

CHAPTER XI.

On the 24th of December, 1829, I was elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and was received with the usual formalities at the next meeting, 14th January, 1830. This led to my making the acquaintance of many remarkable persons—Hallam, the historian of the Middle Ages, Gage Rookwood, the Sussex Antiquary, Hudson Gurney, Crabb Robinson, &c. At the same time I belonged to a newly-formed club, No. 12, Waterloo Place, called the "Literary Union," of which Campbell the poet was the founder and president, and Mr. Cyrus Redding, I think, the secretary.* Jerdan, John Jesse, Dr. Maginn, Samuel Carter Hall, Harrison Ainsworth, and the majority of the working authors of that day had entered it; but some irregularities, which led to dissensions and brought it into bad odour, occa-

* The first committee was composed of the following members—W. Ayrton, Prince Cimitilli, Sir George Duckett, Sir Francis Freeling, J. Goldsmid, Dr. Henderson, Wm. Mackinnon, S. Martin, Sir Gore Ousely, W. H. Pickersgill, R.A., Rev. Dr. Wade, R. Walmer, and J. Webster.

sioned it to be dissolved and reconstructed as "The Clarence." Campbell was re-elected president, and many of the old members adhered to it; but another and more attractive one was projected, principally by Mr. Francis Mills and Mr. Henry Broadwood, with the avowed object of supporting the drama, and bringing authors and actors into more social communication with the noblest and most influential of its patrons as well as with each other. The scheme was warmly taken up, a committee formed, a house in King Street, Covent Garden, known as "Probert's Hotel," was secured by them in November, 1831, and the name selected for the new club was "The Garrick."

On the 15th of February following, the opening was inaugurated by a dinner, H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex, who had signified his pleasure to be patron of the club, taking the chair, supported by the Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards Marquis of Normanby (president), the Marquis of Clanricarde, the Marquis of Worcester, the Earl of Chesterfield, Viscount Castlereagh, Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence, and many other noblemen, whilst the general company included the majority of the principal dramatists and actors then living. It was a vastly pleasant club, receiving constant additions of the most desirable members. Since the days of "Will's" and "Button's," I question if such an assem-

blage as could be daily met with there, between four and six in the afternoon, had ever been seen in a coffee-room. James Smith, Poole, and Charles Mathews the elder, were original members. The Rev. Richard Harris Barham (Tom Ingoldsby), Theodore Hook, Thackeray, Charles Dickens, and a host of memorable names were gradually added to the list; and the club being formed upon the principle that membership was a sufficient introduction, the social intercourse between men of all ranks was an attractive feature in "The Garrick," distinguishing it agreeably from the generality of such establishments, wherein, as a friend of mine observed of one of the most celebrated, "it was as much as your life was worth to ask a stranger to poke the fire."

Amongst the earlier members was a very amiable and accomplished gentleman, who, perfectly sane upon all other topics, had what the Scotch call "a bee in his bonnet" on the subject of the "Millennium." If this were touched upon he would start up from his chair, pace the room agitatedly, and declaim in the most vehement manner on the approach of that momentous epoch. One day, when he was more than ordinarily excited, he assured us that the world would be at an end within three years from that date. Hook looked up from his newspaper, and said, "Come, L——, if you

are inclined to back your opinion, give me five pounds now, and I will undertake to pay you fifty if it occurs." L—— was not quite mad enough to close with the whimsical offer.

I had often met Hook in society without being introduced to him; but our acquaintance and intimacy dated simultaneously from the evening of a dinner at Horace Twiss's in Park Place, St. James's, the precise period of which has escaped me, but not the circumstances connected with it. It was a very merry party. Mr. John Murray (the great Murray of Albemarle Street), James Smith, and two or three others, remained till very late in the dining-room, some of us singing and giving imitations. Hook being pressed to sing another of his wonderful extemporary songs, consented, with a declaration that the subject should be John Murray. Murray objected vehemently, and a ludicrous contention took place, during which Hook dodged him round the table, placing chairs in his path, which was sufficiently devious without them, and singing all the while a sort of recitative, of which I remember only the commencement:

"My friend, John Murray, I see has arrived at the head of the table,
And the wonder is, at this time of night, that John Murray should be able.
He's an excellent hand at a dinner, and not a bad one at a lunch,
But the devil of John Murray is that he never will pass the punch."

It was daybreak—broad daylight, in fact, before we separated. I had given an imitation of Edmund Kean and Holland, in Mathurin's tragedy of "Bertram," which had amused Hook; and, as we were getting our hats, he asked me where I lived. On my answering "At Brompton," he said, "Brompton!—why that's in my way home—I live at Fulham. Jump into my cabriolet, and I'll set you down." The sun of a fine summer morning was rising as we passed Hyde Park Corner. "I have been very ill," said Hook, "for some time, and my doctors told me never to be out of doors after dark, as the night air was the worst thing for me. I have taken their advice. I drive into town at four o'clock every afternoon, dine at 'Crockford's,' or wherever I may be invited, and never go home till this time in the morning. I have not breathed the night air for the last two months." From that day to the latest of his life, Hook's attachment to me was so remarkable, that, knowing his irresistible passion for hoaxing and practical jokes of all descriptions, I was at first a little alarmed occasionally at the peculiar and marked attention he paid to me, accompanied as it was by respect, which from one of his age and celebrity was as singular as, if sincere, it was flattering. That it *was* sincere I had many gratifying proofs, some of which I still treasure, in his handwriting. His fame as an *im-*

provisatore is a matter of social history; but I cannot refrain from giving one instance of his powers which is as creditable to his heart as his head. There had been a large party at the house of some mutual friends of ours and Hook's neighbours at Fulham. It was late, but many still remained, and before separating another song was requested of him. He was weary, and really suffering, but good-naturedly consented on condition that somebody would suggest a subject. No one volunteering, he said, "Well, I think the most proper subject at this hour would be 'Good-night.'" And accordingly he sat down to the piano, and sang several verses, each ending with "Good-night," composed with his usual facility, but lacking the fun and brilliancy which had characterised his former effusions. Some oddity of expression, however, in the middle of one of his verses, elicited a ringing laugh from a fine handsome boy, son of Captain the Hon. Montague Stopford, who was staying with his parents in the house,* and who had planted himself close to the piano. Hook stopped short, looked at him admiringly for an instant,

* "Prior's Bank" at that time jointly occupied by Messrs. Baylis and Whitmore, the latter a son of General Sir George Whitmore, K.C.B. The "boy" became the husband of Caroline, daughter of the late Field-Marshal Sir John Burgoyne, Bart., and died in 1860.

then, completing the verse, added with an intensity of expression I can never forget,—

> "You laugh! and you are quite right,
> For yours is the dawn of the morning,
> And God send you a good night!"

The effect was electrical, and brought tears into the eyes of more than one of the company, while cheer upon cheer arose in recognition of that charming and touching burst of feeling.

Other versions of this remarkable incident are in print, but I have confidence in the accuracy of my own, for one particular reason. Supposing that I had imperfectly heard the words, I could not have mistaken the emphasis in their utterance, and the fervour with which God's blessing was invoked upon that beautiful and joyous boy could not by any possibility have accompanied such words as "For me, is the solemn good night," nor the applause that followed, loud and long, been caused by so melancholy a farewell. I know the tears that filled my eyes were not those of sorrow, but of pleasurable emotion.

My acquaintance with Thackeray commenced some time before he joined "The Garrick," and while I was the guest of his cousin, Captain Thomas James Thackeray, in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, during one of my many visits to Paris. He was at that time

a slim young man, rather taciturn, and not displaying any particular love or talent for literature. Drawing appeared to be his favourite amusement; and he often sat by my side while I was reading or writing, covering any scrap of paper lying about with the most spirited sketches and amusing caricatures. I have one of Charles IX. firing at the Huguenots out of the windows of the Louvre, which he dashed off in a few minutes beside me on the blank portion of the yellow paper cover of a French drama. (See plate). A member of "The Garrick," who was specially unpopular with the majority of the members, was literally *drawn* out of the club by Thackeray. His figure, being very peculiar, was sketched in pen and ink by his implacable persecutor. On every pad on the writing-tables, or whatever paper he could venture to appropriate, he represented him in the most ridiculous and derogatory situation that could be imagined, always with his back towards you: but unmistakable. His victim, it must be admitted, bore this desecration of his "lively effigies" with great equanimity for a considerable period; but at length, one very strong—perhaps too strong—example of the artist's graphic and satirical abilities, combined with the conviction that he was generally objectionable, induced him to retire from the club, and leave the pungent pen of Michael Angelo Tit-

marsh to punish more serious offenders than bores and toadies.

Of my old friend James Smith I have many gratifying recollections; but they are too purely personal for introduction in these pages. I may be allowed, however, to testify, perhaps, to the utter absence of that desire to "play first fiddle," which is too often remarkable in celebrities of his description. He was the heartiest laugher at another's joke, and generally prefaced his own by the question of "Have you heard what a man said when," &c. On hearing a song of mine which I had written in humble imitation of his style, he good-naturedly and gracefully said,—

> "Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
> Or both divide the crown."

This song I shall take the liberty of introducing here, as it has never been printed in its original form, but only as altered for Charles Mathews, to sing in my classical extravaganza, "Theseus and Ariadne," and because some verses, entitled "A Medley, for a Young Lady's Album," written about a year later by Barham, appear to have been suggested by it, some few lines being actually identical.*

* Vide Life of Rev. R. H. Barham, vol. i., p. 300.

A DREAM.

I'm quite in a flutter,
I scarcely can utter
The words to my tongue that come dancing—
come dancing.
I've had such a dream,
That I'm sure it must seem
To incredulous ears like romancing—
romancing.
There can be no question
'Twas sheer indigestion,
Occasioned by supping on chine, Sir—
on chine, Sir;
But if such vagaries
Portend their contraries,
Pray what's the contrary of mine, Sir?—
of mine, Sir?

I dreamed I was walking
With Homer, and talking
The very best Greek I was able—
was able,
When Lord Liverpool, he
Came in very coolly,
And danced a Scotch jig on the table—
the table.
Then Hannibal rising,
Declared 'twas surprising
That gentlemen couldn't sit quiet—
sit quiet,
And sent his attorney
For Sir Richard Birney *
To hasten and put down the riot—
the riot.

He came, and found Cato

* Chief Magistrate at Bow Street.

At cribbage with Plato,
And Washington playing the fiddle—
the fiddle ;
Snatched a dirk in the dark
From the ex-Sheriff Park-
ins,* and ran Peter Moore† through the middle—
the middle.
Then Dido turned paler,
And looked at John Taylor,‡
Who sat by her side like a mummy—
a mummy,
But Mr. MacAdam §
Said, Really dear Madam,
I never play whist with a dummy—
a dummy.

I'm rather perplext
To say what I saw next,
But I think it was Poniatowski—
atowski,
Came driving Queen Sheba,
With Reginald Heber,
Through Portugal Place, in a drosky—
a drosky.
When Nebuchanazar,
In his witty way, Sir,
Observed it was very cold weather—
cold weather,
And flinging his jasey
At Prince Esterhazy,
They both began waltzing together—
together.

* A civic dignitary of that day.
† An unpopular member of the Drury Lane Committee.
‡ Editor of the " Sun."
§ The Colossus of *Roads*.
‖ The Rev. Reginald Heber, of Bibliographical celebrity.

The news next was spread
That Pope Pius was dead,
And Elliston, fearing the worst, Sir—
the worst, Sir,
Proclaimed, in a hurry,
Himself at "the Surrey,"
As Pope Robert William the First, Sir—
the First, Sir.
He hanged Master Burke,*
And alarmed the Grand Turk,
By a bull of excommunication—
nication,
And cutting the rake,
For his family's sake,
Vowed he'd walk in his own coronation—
ronation.

But Mr. O'Connell,
Æneas McDonell,
And two or three more who were Roman—
were Roman,
Came o'er in a jiffy,
And swore by the Liffey,
The Pope should be Cobbett, or no man—
or no man.
Poor Robert, they stripped him,
And in the Thames dipped him,
And thought they were rid of the pest, Sir—
the pest, Sir,
When pop—up he rose,
In a new suit of clothes,
With his hair neatly powdered and drest, Sir—
and drest, Sir.

To laugh I began,
When a good-looking man,

* A second "young Roscius."

With a handsome bald head and a cane, Sir,—
a cane, Sir,
Came and hit me a whack
On the broad of my back,
Saying, "What! you are at it again, Sir—
again, Sir!" *
I woke in a fright,
And I found it was light,
By my bed-side, tea, toast, eggs, and cresses—
and cresses,
And down on the floor,
From a shelf o'er the door,
Had fallen—"Rejected Addresses"—
"Addresses!"

His brother Horace lived at Brighton, and of him I knew less, but quite enough to admire his talent and respect his character; and I have the pleasure still to include amongst my friends his two surviving and accomplished daughters. Of Barham, Dickens, and other stars in "The Garrick" galaxy, as well as of the aforesaid luminaries, I shall speak incidentally hereafter. I will only mention here, a very amusing member of the club in early days, with whom I was

* Alluding to another song, "Farewell to the Lilies and Roses," previously written and afterwards published at Hook's request in Colburn's New Monthly Magazine. In a note to Mrs. Orger, dated Saturday, 30th May (1835), Smith refers to it thus: "On Thursday last there was a great supper at Twiss's, at which I could not attend. Twiss addressed the company, stating that Mr. James Smith had just arrived, and would favour the company with a song. Whereupon Planché started off with one in imitation of me, to the great gratification of a candid and enlightened audience."

on terms of great intimacy as long as he remained in England—Sir Henry Webb, a baronet, and formerly in the Life Guards. He was a man of refined taste, perfect manners, and great good-nature, and possessed the peculiarly happy art of saying agreeable things, without forfeiting the independence of his judgment or incurring the reproach of insincerity. There was a vein of humour also in his observations, of the most original and whimsical description. He was passionately fond of music, and a great patron of Eliason, who first started the "Promenade Concerts" in London, which were afterwards made so popular by Jullien. On my asking him how his *protégé* was going on, he replied, "He is going on so well that he will carry everything before him, or—" after a pause and a pinch of snuff—"he will leave nothing behind him—which is precisely the same thing." As of course it is; and the musician verified the prediction; for he omitted leaving behind him even the violin (a real Cremona) which he had pledged to Mr. Frederick Gye for money advanced to him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE successors to Mr. Price at Drury Lane were Captain Polhill, a gentleman possessing more money than brains, and Alexander Lee, the composer, who had certainly some brains but no money. As I am not writing a history of that or any other theatre, I need not enter into a detail of the circumstances which speedily deprived the Captain of his fortune and the composer nearly of his wits; but one of the first blunders they committed resulted in an event of considerable importance to the theatrical world in general and to me in particular.

The new management had declined to re-engage Madame Vestris; and there being no opening for her at Covent Garden, she suddenly determined to set up for herself. Passing through Long Acre one day, I met her in her carriage. She stopped it, and informed me she had just taken the Olympic in conjunction with Miss Foote; that they had engaged Mrs. Glover, and several other performers, and would be glad if I had

anything ready for immediate production and would assist them in any way by my advice or interest. I readily consented; and remembering a classical burlesque I had written shortly after the production of "Amoroso," but could never get accepted at any theatre, mentioned the subject to her; and it was agreed that I should immediately make such alterations as time and circumstances had rendered necessary, and that she would open the season with it and in it. Having much work on my hands at the time, I induced Charles Dance, with whom I had already written a farce for the Haymarket, to try his hand at this style of composition; and, in two or three evenings, we brushed up together the oft-rejected burlesque, founded on George Colman the younger's story "The Sun Poker," and named by me "Prometheus and Pandora;" and, under the additional locally-allusive title of "Olympic Revels," it was produced on the 3rd of January, 1831 (the opening night), Madame Vestris sustaining the part of Pandora. The extraordinary success of this experiment—for it may justly so be termed—was due not only to the admirable singing and piquante performance of that gifted lady, but also to the charm of novelty imparted to it by the elegance and accuracy of the costume; it having been previously the practice to dress a burlesque in the

most *outré* and ridiculous fashion. My suggestion to try the effect of persons picturesquely attired speaking absurd doggrel fortunately took the fancy of the fair lessee, and the alteration was highly appreciated by the public; but many old actors could never get over their early impressions. Liston thought to the last that Prometheus, instead of the Phrygian cap, tunic, and trousers, should have been dressed like a great lubberly boy in a red jacket and nankeens, with a pinafore all besmeared with lollipop!—a dress, by the way, in which he actually came to a child's party at my house, and insisted on sitting in the lap of my dear old stepmother, who was a great favourite with him. It would be superfluous to say more on this subject than simply that "Olympic Revels" was the first of a series which enjoyed the favour of the public for upwards of thirty years.

The following address was written at my request by John Hamilton Reynolds and spoken by Madame Vestris on the opening night. It is a happy specimen of the graceful muse of a writer too little known to the general public:—

Noble and gentle—Matrons—Patrons—Friends!
Before you here a venturous woman bends!
A warrior woman—that in strife embarks,
The first of all dramatic Joan of Arcs.
Cheer on the enterprise, thus dared by me!
The first that ever led a company!

What though, until this very hour and age,
A lessee-lady never owned a stage!
I'm that *Belle Sauvage*—only rather quieter,
Like Mrs. Nelson, turned a stage proprietor! *
Welcome each early and each late arriver—
This is my omnibus, and I'm the driver!
Sure is my venture, for all honest folk,
Who love a tune or can enjoy a joke,
Will know, whene'er they have an hour of leisure,
Wych-street is best to come to for their pleasure.
The laughter and the lamps, with equal share,
Shall make this house a *light*-house against care.
This is our home! 'Tis yours as well as mine;
Here Joy may pay her homage at Mirth's shrine;
Song, Whim, and Fancy jocund rounds shall dance,
And lure for you the light Vaudeville from France.
Humour and Wit encourage my intent,
And Music means to help to pay my rent.
'Tis not mere promise—I appeal to facts;
Henceforward judge me only by my *acts!*

In this, my purpose, stand I not alone—
All women sigh for houses of their own;
And I was weary of perpetual dodging
From house to house, in search of board and lodging!
Faint was my heart, but, with Pandora's scope,
I find in every *box* a lurking hope:
My dancing spirits know of no decline,
Here's the first *tier* you've ever seen of mine.
Oh, my kind friends! befriend me still, as you
Have in the bygone times been wont to do;
Make me your ward against each ill designer,
And prove Lord Chancellor to a female *minor*.
Cheer on my comrades, too, in their career,
Some of your favourites are around me here;

* Well known to coaching men of that day.

Give them—give me—the smiles of approbation
In this Olympic Game of Speculation.
Still aid the petticoat on old kind principles,
And make me yet a Captain of *Invincibles*.*

A very unforeseen advantage was obtained by the manageress from a dilemma into which she was accidentally placed shortly after the opening, by the necessity arising for an alteration in the bill, which was at that time what is technically called "a four piece bill." One of the four was a drama in two acts, entitled "Mary Queen of Scots," in which Miss Foote enacted the heroine. Its sudden removal, for some cause or other, occasioned the performances of that evening to terminate at eleven instead of twelve. Dance and I, going out with the crowd, heard several expressions of gratification at the prospect of getting home at a rational hour, and the fact favourably contrasted with the practice at other theatres of prolonging the performance till long past midnight, so that persons living at any distance could not possibly be in their beds before the small hours in the morning. The following day therefore, when Madame Vestris consulted us as to what should be the programme for the following week, we advised her strongly to take advantage of the circumstance, and instead of substituting any

* Alluding to Morton's farce, "The Invincibles," in which, at Covent Garden, Madame Vestris achieved a great renown.

drama for the one withdrawn, to announce in the bills that the performances for the future would be so arranged as to terminate every evening as nearly as possible at eleven o'clock.

Our advice was taken. The new arrangement gave general satisfaction, and continued during the whole period of Madame Vestris' lessee-ship, one of the many agreeable features that distinguished the Olympic Theatre. The lines in the finale to the "Olympic Devils,"

> "Since home at eleven you take yourselves,
> It cannot be said that you rake yourselves,"

were invariable received with applause as well as laughter by the audience.

It ought surely to be a self-evident fact that nothing can be more injurious to a theatre than the exhaustion of the actors and the wearying of the public by the spinning out of the performances to so late an hour as is still too frequently the practice at more than one theatre. An anecdote of Liston amusingly illustrates the extent to which it was carried at the Haymarket in the days of Mr. Morris—the period of which I am writing. Mr. and Mrs. Liston were staying at the Ship Hotel, Dover. One day as Liston, returning from a walk, was passing through the hall, the land-

lord accosted him and begged he would do him the favour to step into his parlour, as there was a lady there who would feel much flattered by being permitted to renew her acquaintance with him. Liston, with some degree of curiosity, complied, and was introduced to the landlord's wife, who with many smiles and blushes expressed her fear that Mr. Liston would not recollect her. Liston confessed that he certainly could not call to mind that they had ever met before. Would she oblige him by refreshing his memory? "Oh, Mr. Liston, I had the honour of acting with you one evening." "Indeed, madam! When and where?" "Last season, at the Haymarket." Liston was still oblivious; but a few more words explained the matter clearly. The lady previous to her marriage, which had only recently taken place, had indulged a fancy to go on the stage, and had made her first appearance in a trifling part in the second act of a farce at the Haymarket at a quarter to one in the morning. As the farce had not been repeated, and Liston had never set eyes on her since, it was not particularly astonishing that his recognition of her was not instantaneous.

Since that period a practice has arisen which is still more to be reprobated; the result to a certain degree of the former. No *star* or principal performer,

whose position enables him or her to dictate terms to the manager, will now condescend to play in the last piece, so some old worn-out farce, disgracefully mutilated to meet the circumstances, is hurried through anyhow by the unfortunate members of the company who are compelled to work, some twenty yawning persons remaining in the house from mere idleness after the curtain has fallen on "the attraction of the evening."

It is impossible to protest too strongly against this custom—cruel to the poor actors, unjust to the author of the ill-treated farce, and disrespectful to the remnant of the audience who, however few, have paid for their admission, and have a right to the best efforts of the establishment.

In the previous June I had received from my esteemed friend, Mr. Thomas Morton, the well-known author of the comedies of "Speed the Plough," "The Way to Get Married," "The School of Reform," and many other sterling dramatic works, the following letter :—

"My dear Planché,—

"The Drury Lane lessees have thought me worthy a place in their cabinet. I have often been gratified by seeing your plays. I hope to be gratified by reading one. I think you will find our premier a very amiable person, and in the

Master of the Revels a friend who would feel very great pleasure in forwarding your wishes and smoothing the dramatic path generally rough enough. Pray favour me with a call.

"Yours ever,

"THOS. MORTON."

At the same time matters had been satisfactorily settled at Covent Garden, and I had arranged to write another Opera with Bishop. I had also promised Mr. Morris a comedy for the Haymarket; so, as I have already stated, I had enough work on my hands. However, I managed to get through it, producing a farce ("The Jenkinses") at Drury Lane, 7th December, 1830, in which I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of a beautiful young actress, soon to become one of the greatest favourites on the stage, namely, Miss Mordaunt, better known as Mrs. Nisbett, and eventually as Lady Boothby, of whom I retain many pleasant recollections and one most painful, which will be recorded in its proper place. My Opera with Bishop, "The Romance of a Day"—the last I had the pleasure of writing for that most melodious and truly English composer, and containing some of his most charming music—was produced at Covent Garden, February 3, 1831; and "The Legion of Honour," musical drama, at Drury Lane, on the

16th of April following, the cast comprising Liston, Farren, Dowton, and Harley; Miss Poole, the still popular vocalist, then only ten years of age, sustaining the part of a drummer, in which she played the drum and sang most effectively. I had noticed the child's ability and wrote the part expressly for her, and on her quitting Drury Lane at the end of the season, had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from her master, Mr. James F. Harris, containing the following sentence:—"You, my dear Sir, have been her best friend, and whatever money or fame either she or I may gain, I shall always trace it back with heartfelt gratitude to you the fount from which it springs." As a substantial proof of his sincerity he also presented me with a handsome silver snuff-box, which, as I never took snuff, I handed to my excellent step-mother who did.

I kept my promise to Mr. Morris by writing a two-act comedy, "A Friend at Court," for a rising young actress, Miss Taylor, who became Mrs. Walter Lacy, for whom also I wrote a melodrama, entitled "The Army of the North," produced at Covent Garden, 29th October, 1831; and, in addition to these, translated and arranged Scribe and Auber's opera, "Le Philtre," for Miss Paton and Mr. Wood at Drury Lane, which was first performed, under the title of

"The Love Charm," on the 6th of November following, amounting altogether to twelve acts in less than twelve months, independently of the revision of the "Olympic Revels," in which I had the assistance of Charles Dance. All these pieces were fairly successful, with the exception of "The Army of the North," which was speedily disbanded and "The Love Charm," which was in-*operative*, partly from the injudicious haste in its production, in order to meet that of "Fra Diavolo" at Covent Garden, so that the principal performers scarcely knew a word or a note in the last act, and partly because of the brilliant success of "Fra Diavolo" at the rival establishment the same evening. A very proper lesson to managers, and as usual utterly lost upon them. No theatre ever prospered or deserved to prosper by such absurd and illiberal opposition, and yet the practice is still persevered in. Had the managers of Drury Lane been actuated by a love of art and a proper sense of the respect they owed to the public instead of an ungenerous desire to damage their neighbour, the delightful music of Auber would have been as creditably executed at one house as at the other, and the public have become as familiar with the airs in "Le Philtre" as they are with those in "L'Elisire d'Amore," the same subject composed by Donizetti which has taken possession of the operatic

stage, while of its predecessor nothing is known in England by our playgoing public except the spirited overture, which is constantly performed, and should, I think, induce some manager to give the Town an opportunity of hearing the whole work—one of the most agreeable of its class—and of studying the mode of treatment of the same subject by two such celebrated composers.

The production of the "Philtre" at one house against "The Elisire" at another would be a wise and laudable policy, honourable to both the competitors for public favour and beneficial to art, while the putting up a work simply because it is announced by your rival, or rushing out anything in the same style to anticipate his effect in the mere paltry spirit of vexatious opposition, is unworthy of gentlemen and impolitic in speculators, as it too frequently awakens comparisons which are proverbially acknowledged to be odious.

Although a considerable sufferer by this silly conduct, against which I remonstrated in vain, I sincerely rejoiced at the well-merited success of "Fra Diavolo," which was admirably put on the stage, and felt that the failure of "The Love Charm" served the lessees of Drury Lane perfectly right.

The year 1831 terminated with the production of

our second classical burlesque burletta, "Olympic Devils; or, Orpheus and Eurydice;" and on this occasion another advance was made in the decorative departments. The scenery of "The Revels" had been limited to a few clouds, the interior of a cottage, and a well-used modern London street, which was made a joke of in the bill to anticipate criticism. Haste and lack of funds had something to do with it; but we had now both time and money. It was suggested that the scenery should be picturesque and in keeping with the dresses. We had a most infernal Tartarus, a very gloomy Styx, and a really beautiful Greek landscape with the portico of the Temple of Bacchus, the columns of which joined in the general dance when

"Orpheus with his lute made trees," &c.,

to the great delight of the audience. The Bacchanalian procession, arranged by Oscar Byrne, considering the size of the stage and numbers employed, has never been surpassed for picture and animation.

The success of "Olympic Devils" exceeded, if possible, that of its predecessors, and the popularity of this new class of entertainment was thoroughly established.

CHAPTER XIII.

In 1832, Laporte became lessee of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, which he opened on the 1st of October with a military spectacle, written by me at his suggestion, and partly founded on an early incident in the life of Marlborough, entitled "His First Campaign." I wrote also by his desire a five-act play entitled "Reputation," for Charles Kean and Miss Ellen Tree, which was favourably received; but there seemed a blight upon the theatre, and nothing brought money sufficient to cover the enormous expenses; and the following season Mr. Bunn—"the Napoleon of the drama," as he was proud of being called, as Elliston, his old employer, had been before him—having succeeded to the throne of Old Drury on the failure of Polhill and Lee, courageously grasped the sceptre resigned in despair by Laporte, and reigned despotically over both those theatrical hemispheres. Much amusement was created in the profession by Laporte's declaration that "no English theatre would be worth

managing till that abominable Saturday was done away with!" What he meant, however, was, not the abolition of pay-day altogether, but, in conformity with the French system, making it monthly instead of weekly, so as to give the manager a chance of a higher average of the receipts, and enable him more conveniently to meet his liabilities.

At this period Mr. Arnold, who had been burnt out of the Lyceum in 1830, rented during the summer months the Adelphi Theatre, and applied to me to undertake the acting management for the season 1833. "I am too old and too lazy, sir," he said, at our interview at his house in Golden Square. "I want a man of fresher mind and new ideas—I send you there in my shoes." Unfortunately, the shoes proved to be clogs—mais passons là-dessus. Mr. Arnold and I had been too long friends for me to feel anything but regret that I was prevented from serving him as I was most anxious to do.

The only agreeable recollection I retain of this engagement is of a friendship which accidentally arose out of it; and that, alas! is saddened by the thought of its brief endurance and melancholy termination. As a privilege of my office, I had a small private box in the proscenium of the theatre, which I had the pleasure of frequently placing at the disposal of

Madame Malibran Garcia, who delighted in the rich humour of John Reeve—certainly, when he was sober or as nearly so as could be expected—one of the finest low comedians on the stage at that, or perhaps any other period. Often when I arrived at the theatre, I was told, "Madame Malibran is in your box, sir;" for almost every evening she was disengaged she would run down on the chance of finding a place in it. Our mere bowing acquaintance rapidly ripened into intimacy; and some of the most enjoyable evenings of my life were passed in the society of that brilliant and fascinating woman. One, in particular, can never be forgotten. I had dined with Bunn at Eagle Lodge, Brompton, the only other guests being Malibran, De Beriot, and Thalberg. After dinner, the latter sat down to the piano and extemporised several charming melodies, to which Malibran sang — not words, of course, but notes—while De Beriot played an accompaniment on the violin. Subsequently to these enchanting "Lieder öhne Worte," De Beriot gave us an amusing description of the performance he had once witnessed of a woman who had danced on the tight-rope to her own playing of the French horn. Fastening a bunch of keys to the strings of his violin, he chalked a line on the carpet, and went through all the evolutions of a rope-dancer, imitating the French-horn

on his own instrument to perfection. One "*tour de force*" suggested another—the night rapidly and unheededly passed, and a lovely summer morning saw us seated eating mulberries in the garden, under a fine old tree that was the pride of it.

At Madame Malibran's request, I translated an operetta for her, the music by Chelard, which was performed at Drury Lane, June 4th, 1833, under the title of "The Students of Jena;" and when she was discontented with the effusions of "the Poet Bunn," as "Punch" delighted to call him, she would send me her music, superscribed, "Betterer words here." Her early death was a fatal loss to English opera: her genius imparting a vitality to the most mediocre compositions; and upon our stage it is improbable that we shall ever see her like again. I transcribe here her letter to Bunn on the subject of the aforesaid opera, being the only relic of her handwriting I possess:—

"Mr. Planché has just been reading to me his delightful little opera, and I think, *sans meilleur avis*, nothing can be better; therefore I am satisfied *complètement;* but that is only harlequin's marriage, if my advice stands single, and is not ratified by yours.

"I remain,

"Your Columbine,

"MALIBRAN."

On 25th of March in this year I had witnessed at Covent Garden the closing scene of another great genius. I was present at the last performance of Edmund Kean. He acted Othello to his son Charles's Iago. In the third act, having delivered the fine speech terminating with, "Farewell, Othello's occupation's gone!" with undiminished expression, and seized, with his usual tiger-like spring, Iago by the throat, he had scarcely uttered the words, "Villain! be sure—" when his voice died away in inarticulate murmurs, his head sank on his son's breast, and the curtain fell never again to rise upon that marvellous tragedian. He expired at Richmond, on the 15th of May following.

CHAPTER XIV.

On the 10th of June, 1833, as I have previously stated, the Royal assent was given to the Dramatic Authors' Act, and a society was immediately formed to facilitate the working of it, with the least possible inconvenience to managers; for the clear and simple words of the Act, about which there could be no mistake, certainly placed the proprietors or lessees of provincial theatres in a very awkward situation. The performance of any sort of dramatic entertainment, "or any portion thereof," without the consent in writing of its author or his assignee, "rendered the parties representing, or causing it to be represented, liable to a penalty of not less than forty shillings for every offence, or an action for damages either to the amount which it could be proved the author had suffered, or of what the manager had gained by the representation, at the option of the author, with double costs of suit." The director of a theatre any distance from London, therefore, could not, under sudden and unexpected circum-

stances, change his bill, and put up a protected drama, without incurring the penalty, or exposing himself to an action for damages according to the terms of the statute, as it would be impossible for him to obtain, in the course of two or three hours, the written permission required; and in any case he would be compelled to correspond and make separate terms with every individual author whose pieces he was desirous of producing.

It was, consequently, as much to the interest of the managers as to that of the authors, if indeed not more so, that some arrangement should be made by which the obvious difficulty could be avoided.

By the establishment of a society in London, with a secretary who should be authorised by the members generally to grant conditional permission as the agent of the author, and the fixing of a scale of prices, according to the size of the theatre, for every class of protected dramas, managers were enabled to play whatever they pleased without fear of legal proceedings, and could calculate exactly the expenses they were incurring. Accustomed, however, for so many years to ignore the rights of authors, the recognition of them by the law of the land was anything but palatable to managers in general, and it was really as pitiable as ludicrous to observe the mean shifts and dishonest practices to which many resorted to escape the payment of a few

shillings to a poor dramatist, while they would have considered it disgraceful to quit the town without paying the butcher or butterman's bill, or to leave their landlord to whistle for the rent of his lodgings.

Of course there were freebooters, in this as well as other professions, who had a more lofty disdain for the distinctions of meum and tuum, and who, not being worth powder and shot, carried on their depredations openly with impunity. These unscrupulous persons were thorns in the side not only of the authors, but of respectable managers, under whose very noses they opened portable theatres or booths, in which they played for nothing pieces the others honestly paid for, frequently anticipating their production at the regular theatre, and therefore diminishing their attraction. This was a very reasonable cause of complaint to the society from honourable managers with whom we were in regular communication. Unfortunately, however, we had no power to protect them, as these offenders were, like the ghost in Hamlet—"here," "there," and "gone" before a writ could be served upon them; so we were, and still are, obliged to grin and endure it. The hardship of the case is this. We were told we had the same remedy which the law gave to any other persons possessing property, and who were robbed and swindled. Granted; but the important difference in

the *character* of the property was entirely overlooked.

Personal effects may be protected from the clutches of the area-sneak or the bolder burglar; and the artifices of the swindler may be foiled by the prudence of the tradesman. But neither bolt nor chain, iron safe nor private watchman, can prevent the theft of words, and the utterance of them, nor any amount of caution avail to secure the dramatic author from depredation, as his refusal to trust a suspicious customer with intangible, unsubstantial property, over which he has no physical control, is not of the slightest consequence. Nor, however prompt may be his action, can he recover the stolen goods, as he might his plate, his purse, his watch, or a tradesman the wares *he* deals in; and, therefore, though he can proceed against the offender, and may possibly convict him, he is destitute of the means of *prevention* all other persons possess, and by the neglect of which they can alone be injured. As no legal enactment could possibly give him such means, I contend that exceptional powers should be accorded to him; and as his property cannot be protected, the unauthorised appropriation of it should be visited by much more certain and summary punishment than an action for penalties or damages, in which the onus probandi is placed entirely on the shoulders of the plaintiff, and

who, even if he obtain a verdict, may be left minus the penalties, and saddled with his own expenses. Some glimpse of the hardship of this position no doubt induced the original framers of the Act to insert "with double costs of suit." And there is no doubt that it had a salutary effect on the considerations of some who might otherwise have questioned honesty being the best policy; but, in 1842, "double costs of suit" were abolished in all cases, and, by a subsequent Act, concerning "common law procedure," the dramatic authors were deprived of one of their best weapons of defence.*

The first step was, however, gained by English dramatists, after a long and dispiriting struggle, to place themselves on a footing with their continental brethren, though the measure of relief was scanty indeed, when compared with the corresponding law of France; and I earnestly hope the day will yet come, when it will be considerably extended and improved, although perfect assimilation to the French Code Dramatique is perhaps impossible.

In England the drama is a mere amusement, and its

* Lord Chief Justice Denman also, by a decision shortly after the passing of the Act, rendered nugatory the retrospective clauses, by transferring the benefit clearly intended for the author to the publisher, who has in some instances given as little as two guineas for a copyright now worth from fifty to a hundred.

exhibition the speculation of private individuals. In France it is a political engine. In times of great political excitement the theatres in England are almost deserted. In France, on the contrary, they are crowded with the conflicting factions, who seek in the drama for sympathy, and in the theatre an arena for the exposition of their feelings. The direction of theatrical establishments is connected with, and their produce partially appropriated by, the Government. Latterly, it has taken less interest in some of them; but the "Académie de Musique" (the Grand French Opera) and the "Théâtre Français" are still, I believe, in the receipt of a *subvention* or grant of money from Government for their support; and, though its interference in the management of others may be less direct, it still exercises a surveillance over their receipts, and at the same time that it claims one portion for the sustenance of the poor (le droit des pauvres), it secures to the authors their nightly shares (le droit d'auteur) as regulated by the Code Dramatique, not only in Paris, but throughout the French dominions. There is no misunderstanding—no shuffling—no dunning. According to the number of acts, the portion of the gross receipts of the evening, as determined by the code, is subtracted from the account rendered to Government, and the author, on repairing to the recognised agent, turns

at once to his name or the title of his piece and receives the money.

On the first introduction of our Bill, an outcry was raised by the country managers of their inability, in the depressed state of theatrical affairs, to bear any, the smallest, additional burden. Upon the same ground it might have been argued, that a man who could not afford to purchase goods to retail, was entitled to steal them.

The great champion of these dissentients, Mr. Wilkins, an architect, and proprietor of several provincial theatres, declared before the committee of the House of Commons, that in his opinion no modern dramatist, Mr. Knowles perhaps excepted, deserved to be paid; while, in the same breath; he admitted that nothing but the melodramas and other pieces successfully produced in London by the writers he was insulting would draw money in the country. On being examined before the same committee, I commented on his self-convicting evidence, and contended that if the performance of a drama merely lessened the loss of the manager one penny, the author of it was at least entitled to a farthing. The manager was not compelled to play the piece, and assuredly would not unless he believed he should profit by it; and if he did not, by what right did he cause the author to be a sharer in his specula-

tions? On the passing of the Bill, a dinner was given by the newly formed society, at the Thatched House Tavern in St. James's Street, to Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer and his brother Henry (now Lord Dalling); and in the first year of the operation of the Act, the money sent up from the various country theatres to the agent of the society amounted to nearly £800, independently of the payments merged in Mr. Knowles's own engagement as an actor, which must have added considerably to his portion. Trifling as this sum was, compared with that drawn from the provinces during the same period in France (M. Scribe alone receiving more than three times that amount), it was at least so much gained by those who would not otherwise have got a shilling, and established a system which, I trust, may one day produce to the widow or child of a deservedly popular dramatist an income, which the precarious nature of his profession renders it all but impossible he should bequeath to them in the more satisfactory form of "Three per cent. Reduced" in the Bank of England.

It may be satisfactory to those of my readers who are lovers of the theatre, and friends to all who labour for the stage, to explain to them—for few are really aware—the vast difference that existed, at the period I speak of, between the position of the dramatic writer

in England and that of his brother in France, and point out the many great advantages enjoyed by the latter. First and foremost is the great fact that the law having been laid down, Government itself took care to enforce compliance with it, and the remuneration of an author was as secure as it was liberal. In his dealings with the manager, the petty chandler-shop system of haggling for terms, which still disgraces English theatrical transactions, was unheard of. The acceptance of a drama ensured its performance within a certain time, the manager being liable to an action for damages proportioned to the delay and consequent inconvenience to the author, and the performance ensured the payment at the Théâtre Français and the Odéon (or second Theatre Français) as follows:—

The gross receipts of the evening, including the subscriptions for boxes let by the year or the night, as well as those of the Royal Family and the ministers, being ascertained, one-third was deducted for the expenses of the management, and from the net produce the author received—

For a piece in 4 or 5 acts	one 8th part.
For a piece in 2 or 3 acts	one 12th part.
For a piece in 1 act	one 16th part.

At the Opéra Comique, according to the regulations

agreed upon October 1st, 1828, the scale of payment was—

For a work in 5, 4, or 3 acts	8½ per cent. on the gross receipts each night of performance.
For a work in 2 acts . . .	6½ per cent. on ditto.
For a work in 1 act . . .	6 per cent. on ditto.

And the author whose work or works formed the entire representation of the evening was entitled to an additional gratification of six per cent. on the gross receipts.

The Vaudeville, the Gymnase, the Palais Royal, and the Nouveautés varied but slightly from the above regulations, twelve per cent. being taken from the gross receipts and divided amongst the authors of the evening's entertainments, with three per cent. on each additional piece, if more than a certain number were performed. The Académie Royale de Musique, the Porte St. Martin, Gaieté, Ambigu, and other theatres paid a stipulated sum nightly for each drama, according to the number of acts.

Independently of these payments, the author was allowed the benefit of the sale of a certain number of admissions nightly; and it is to be remembered that these tickets were accorded by the management to the author for the especial purpose of disposal, and in part payment of his labour, and that consequently there

was nothing disgraceful in his availing himself of such means of remuneration.*

In addition to these saleable admissions, authors who had produced two five-act pieces at the Français or Odéon were entitled to personal free admission for life; the author or composer of a piece in five acts at the Opéra Comique was entitled to a personal free admission to any part of the theatre, before or behind the curtain (except the pit and the private boxes) for five years; for four years, if the piece was in four acts; three, if in three; and two, if in one or two acts. Authors of two pieces in five, four, or three acts obtained their admission for life; the same for three pieces in two acts, four, six, one, &c. Those who had twice gained a free admission for life were entitled to a second free admission, with the right of disposing of it annually; and at the same rate he might gain a third, which he was privileged to alienate as the second; but no more in any case whatever. After his death, his widow or next heir retained one of the three admissions for life; but could not transfer it. At all the other theatres the right of personal admission and sale of tickets was also legally recognised.

* I find it stated that in one year (1830) the *farmer* of Monsieur Scribe's portion had acknowledged to the payment of 13,000 francs (about £900 sterling) for it to that gentleman.

Thus the petty and constantly occurring vexation of the suspension of the free list was and is unknown in France as affecting the privilege of authors or composers. Here it is made alternately the instrument of cupidity or injustice, the stale puff of a sinking establishment, or the mean vengeance of an offended manager. I have spoken in the past tense of the other privileges and regulations, because my information is derived from an exhaustive pamphlet on this subject, written by my friend Thomas James Thackeray, author of "The Mountain Sylph" and other works, in 1832, his residence in Paris and intimacy with French dramatists and managers affording him especial advantages for the purpose; but, whatever slight alterations or modifications may have taken place since that period, the important part of the regulations, viz., the security of payment and the inviolability of personal free admission, exists, I believe, even under the unhappy circumstances France is at this moment placed in; and the difference between the position of the French and English dramatists is deserving of more serious consideration by all lovers of the drama than has hitherto been accorded to it.

In conclusion, I will take the liberty of quoting some few observations of my own in a notice of the above-mentioned pamphlet at the time of its publica-

tion in England—the present condition of the theatrical world being in many respects less satisfactory than even at that period.

"In this country of course we could not call upon the law to interfere with the bargain to be made between authors and managers, any more than with the terms entered into between authors and their publishers, or with any other description of private contract; but we think it would be decidedly for the advantage of both parties that they should come, by mutual agreement, to an arrangement similar to that which exists in France.

"What is the grand obstacle to the adoption of such an arrangement?—an arrangement which would avoid a thousand quarrels and heartburnings—an arrangement eventually as beneficial to the management as the author. We know but of one—the horror that would be instantly expressed by the proprietor of a theatre at the necessity of honestly showing his receipts. It would be the ruin of the concern. And why the ruin? People would talk; the wretched accounts would be published; and the public, like rats, would shun a falling house. Do not the people talk always? Are not the wretched accounts published in every dramatic *coterie*, with all the exaggerations malice or disappointment can invent? The pit may look

miserably empty, yet contain double the money that ignorance or prejudice may proclaim. How often do we hear it stated that there was not more than £20 in the house at Drury Lane or Covent Garden on such and such an evening? Were the receipts known they would be found, perhaps, to amount to £120—a losing account, possibly, but still much less so than report would make it.

"And to whom, after all, need these documents be shown? To the author or his agent only. If a piece was really not attractive, its writer would not be too ready to proclaim the fact; if it filled the treasury, he would swell the cry of triumph, and do treble the good to the theatre than is now obtained by the puffs of 'unprecedented success' and 'overflowing audiences,' which disgrace the play-bills of England only. It is not as if managers were compelled to produce their balance-sheets—the knowledge of their receipts, unattended by that of their expenses, leaves their profit or their loss as much a mystery as ever, and as to the public shunning an empty house, give them something worth seeing and they will soon make it a full one.

"'Managers,' said Beaumarchais, 'love their own interests better than they understand them.'"

It is painful at the present moment to look upon the circumstances in which the families of Douglas Jerrold,

Robert and William Brough, and Mark Lemon have been left, and reflect on what they might have been had a Code Dramatique, under the supervision of Government, existed in England similar to that in France.

CHAPTER XV.

EARLY in the winter season of 1833-34, my version of Scribe and Auber's opera, "Gustave Trois," was produced with great success at Covent Garden; but I was still hampered with actors who couldn't sing, and compelled to cut my coat more in accordance with my cloth, than with my inclination.

I also took the liberty to vindicate the character of poor Madame Ankerstrom, who was actually living at that period, and, as I was credibly informed, had been extremely pained by the unnecessary slur cast upon her own reputation, by representing her as struggling with a guilty passion for the king—a king, too, who, it was notorious, so far from seeking to inspire such a passion, was insensible to it himself. "His affections did not that way tend," and it was, therefore, a wanton falsification of history, as well as an aggravation of the distress of the unfortunate lady, whose feelings must have been sufficiently wounded by the renewed publicity

given to the almost forgotten crime of her husband. The author of the "Ballo in Maschera" has done still better, by transferring the scene of action and incidents to another country, and substituting fictitious for historical personages; but he had the advantage of furnishing a libretto for another composer, and I was compelled to adhere to Gustavus III. and Sweden.

As in the case of "Le Philtre" and "L'Elisire," it is a pity the brilliant music of Auber's "Gustave" has no opportunity of being occasionally contrasted with that of Verdi's "Ballo," equally dramatic and effective. With the exception of the Christmas extravaganza at the Olympic, I had not had any very gratifying success for the last two years. I had not been disgraced by a damnation, but I had not enjoyed a triumph. The reception of "Gustavus III.," was, however, all I could desire. It was "a hit—a palpable hit," and "Secret Service" at Drury Lane, admirably illustrated by Farren, and "The Loan of a Lover" at the Olympic, brought me up again "with a wet sail."

The latter piece, which is a standing dish to this day, was, certainly, most perfectly acted by Madame Vestris and dear old Robert Keeley, whom I had had the pleasure to introduce first to Elliston and afterwards to Charles Kemble. A more sterling actor never trod the stage—giving character and importance to the

smallest part he played, and never overstepping the modesty of nature.

During the autumn of 1834, accident led me to visit a little theatre which had been opened in the "Court Suburb," as Leigh Hunt has called it, of Kensington. In this curious little nook, wherein the drama had furtively taken root, I witnessed the performance of a piece, entitled "The Queen's Lover," by a company of actors all previously unknown to me, even by name, but who generally exhibited talent, and one, in my humble opinion, genius.

I was sufficiently impressed by what I had seen, to induce Madame Vestris to accompany me on a second visit, and Mr. Bunn on a third; and I had the pleasure to find my opinion confirmed by both these important theatrical potentates.

Mr. Bunn, who at that time had just succeeded to the throne of the united stage-kingdoms of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, had arranged with me for the adaptation of Fenimore Cooper's novel, "The Bravo," introducing the music, by Maliarni, of an Italian opera on the same subject, performed in Paris, and in which Madame Grisi had been greatly successful. The old obstacle, the want of a singer who could act, immediately presented itself. There was no longer at Drury Lane a popular melo-dramatic performer like

James Wallack; but in "The Queen's Lover" I fancied I had discovered the man we wanted. Bunn thought so too, and engaged him immediately. This was Henry Gaskell Denvil; and had Mr. Bunn been guided by common prudence, there was stuff enough of the right sort in this poor fellow—starving as he was when I lighted upon him—to have recruited the fortunes of Drury Lane Theatre, and to have made his own. Instead, however, of reserving him for the melodramatic character, which I designed him for, Bunn, fancying he had secured a second Edmund Kean, insisted on his making his first appearance as Shylock. Denvil came to me in the greatest distress. "He is putting me," were his words, "on a pinnacle to break my neck: but what can I do? I have, for weeks past, walked Kensington Gardens without a dinner, in order that my wife and little ones should not lose a crumb by me. Mr. Bunn offers me five pounds per week, which is affluence to us—salvation! How can I refuse?" How could he, indeed? I could only encourage him to make the attempt.

He did make it, and puzzled the press. The diversity of opinion, not only as to the extent of his abilities, but respecting almost every scene of his performance, is, perhaps, scarcely to be equalled in the annals of

criticism. After three performances of Shylock, he appeared in "Richard III." and "Bertram," with the same result; the conflicting evidence of the "Times," "Herald," "Chronicle," and "Morning Post," being most amusingly summed up by the "True Sun," in the evening. In these, and other characters, he had to endure comparison with Edmund Kean; but, in Lord Byron's "Manfred," which was subsequently produced, he had the advantage of an original part, and united the suffrages of the critics. The remainder of his brief career—his ill-treatment by Bunn, and melancholy exit from the stage of life, I must leave untold in these pages. I have only here to express my regret that I was deprived of the services of an excellent actor, whom I had singled out for my hero, without the consolation of seeing him permanently established in the higher position which, notwithstanding many disadvantages, he had attained, and might have secured under a more judicious management.

I was, consequently, condemned to accept Mr. Cooper as the only available exponent of my unfortunate "Bravo"; one of those highly respectable actors who are always "clean and perfect," and who may be thoroughly depended upon for everything except acting. John Cooper was a model of his class—a class, I believe indigenous to England: natives to the *manner*

born. I have seen on foreign stages, good, bad, and indifferent actors; but in the worst there was always discernible a glimpse of the *artist*—a creditable conception of the character, however faulty might be the execution. The author was, at least, understood, and more or less ably interpreted. Otherwise, indeed, the actor would not have been permitted to appear on the stage. Now, the misfortune of the "respectable actor" in this country is, that, possessing fairly enough the common-place qualifications for his profession, he plods through his part to the satisfaction of the general public, but to the agony of the author, who, though every syllable of it is distinctly spoken, scarcely recognises his own language from the style of its delivery, in many cases, as I know to my cost, conveying to the audience an entirely different notion of the character it was intended to illustrate. I remember asking Charles Young one day, when I met him in Paris, how he accounted for the superiority of the general run of French actors to those of our own country. His answer was, "My dear fellow, *they understand the value of words.*" No definition could be more perfect. That is "the heart of the mystery." That is the precise knowledge of which the class of actors I am alluding to are woefully and hopelessly ignorant. They get the words by heart, and utter them distinctly, and to the general ear

with sufficient propriety; but of the effect to be imparted to the most common-place sentence, by some particular emphasis or intonation, they have not the slightest conception. Let me hasten to do justice to the great body of actors of the present day—very few of the class I have been describing are now to be found. The "walking gentleman" of forty years ago has walked off, and his successor *is* a gentleman who can walk and talk like one; and there is scarcely a theatre in London where what used to be considered a "respectable actor," could now command an engagement.

I have travelled terribly out of the record; but my old wounds began to bleed afresh at the recollection of the mangling I have endured from "respectable actors." To return to "The Red Mask," which will furnish me with yet another cause for bestowing my tediousness on the reader. The opera was produced on the 15th of November, the principal music being allotted to Templeton, and the Bravo acted by John Cooper, exactly as he acted Cortez, in my opera of that name, Major Vanberg in "Charles XII.," and the Linen Draper in "The Jenkins's." If he discovered any differences in these characters, he ingeniously concealed it from the public; but I—or rather I should say Fenimore Cooper—had one interpreter of his language, who left nothing to be desired. Ellen Tree, who played the sister of the

Bravo, in the scene wherein she supplicates the Doge of Venice to save her brother, pleaded with a natural earnestness that not only deeply affected the whole house, but drew tears from the eyes of Richard Younge, an excellent actor, who sustained the part of the Doge, and declared to me afterwards that he did not think he could have been more moved had the situation been real instead of imaginary.

Those who are acquainted with the novel on which this opera was founded, will remember that the dreaded and execrated Bravo is an innocent man, who has never shed a drop of blood, and is simply a helpless slave of the infamous Council of Ten, and finally a sacrifice to their hideous policy. On hearing of her brother's condemnation, his sister obtains an audience of the Doge, and receives from him an assurance that the execution shall not take place. The waving of a flag from a window of the palace is to be the signal of mercy. The poor girl departs full of joy and gratitude, but the guilty tribunal can only escape conviction by the immolation of their innocent servant, and the signal of mercy is treacherously made the signal of death. As it has been invariably my practice, I followed as closely as possible the story I was dramatising. As the appointed hour tolled from the Campanile, the troops formed a hollow square, completely concealing the prisoner and

the headsman from the view of the audience. A flag was waved from a window of the ducal palace. The axe gleamed for an instant above the caps of the multitude assembled round the fatal spot—it descended, and the crowd and the soldiery rapidly separating, the masked executioner was seen standing alone beside the block, and in front of a black cloth which covered the body of the Bravo.

Every thing being thus left to the imagination of the spectator, the effect was infinitely stronger than the grossest exhibition could have produced. The powerful interest of the story, wrought up to the highest pitch by the admirable acting of Miss Ellen Tree, added to the general excitement, and a vehement call for the alteration of the last scene was raised by some forty or fifty persons, amidst the enthusiastic plaudits of the majority of the audience, who were only struck by the novelty and effect of the picture. Talk of the sensational dramas of the present day! The scene witnessed in Drury Lane Theatre on the night of the 15th of November, 1834, has never been equalled in my recollection, unless, perhaps, on the occasion of the first representation of Mr. Charles Reade's drama, "Never too Late to Mend," at the Princess's, when, according to report (for I was not present), there was an uproar which might possibly

have resembled it. In my case, the imagination of some of the spectators was wrought to so extravagant a pitch, that one man in the pit declared he had seen a stream of red fluid, to imitate blood, pour down from the block to the footlights; and another, that a gory head was exhibited to the public! Mr. Francis Bacon, one of the sub-editors of the "Times," came behind the scenes, and strongly urged Bunn to induce me to alter the termination of the opera, and similar remonstrances appearing in the principal journals on the following morning, the last scene *was* altered, and the Bravo saved by the interference of the Doge, in the most approved melo-dramatic fashion, and contrary to all the objects and moral of the story.

I sat up in the slips on the second night of performance, the house being crowded to suffocation, and when the curtain fell, a gentleman, who had been sitting near me, absorbed in the interest of the plot, jumped up and exclaimed, "Confound it; they've spoiled the piece!" which was undoubtedly the fact. The voice of the public, as it was presumed to be, had been most respectfully obeyed—and what was the consequence? The public were woefully disappointed, and the receipts fell off accordingly. I should be amongst the last to advocate any scenic representation in which good taste and feeling were outraged for a mere coup-de-theatre,

or to propose any exhibition tending to brutalise the people. They may be morbidly excited by the most vivid representations of barbarous and bloody murders, but the public were not allowed to *fancy*, for they certainly were not permitted to *see*, the execution of the Bravo, according to the popular novel on which the opera was founded, and in illustration of the fiendish policy of the Republic of Venice, which it was the sole object of the author to expose and brand with infamy.

To what is now distinguished as the sensational drama, an objection is justifiably raised, on the ground that the incidents are introduced for the purpose of affecting the nervous system only, and not with the higher motive of pointing a moral, or the development of human passion. However cleverly constructed, they appeal to the lowest order of intellect; and the perils and atrocities represented being those most familiar to the public, from their daily occurrence in real life, and graphic descriptions in the newspapers, the more naturally they are depicted, the more fearful and revolting is their effect.

What can be more dramatically sensational than the tragedy of "Macbeth?" But strip it of its romantic accessories—reduce its magnificent poetry to the ordinary prose of our day; imagine a nobleman in modern

costume rushing out of the bedroom of a venerable guest, whom he has murdered in his sleep, with two bloody carving-knives in his hands! There is no doubt the effect would be infinitely more horrible; but would such horror be desirable upon the stage? To any one possessing the smallest modicum of good taste the sight would be simply loathsome. Had my story been founded on the Cato Street conspiracy, and terminated with the decapitation of Thistlewood in the Old Bailey, no contrivance, however ingenious, by which the hideous circumstances were concealed from actual sight, could have atoned for their introduction. But distance of time and place, foreign scenery and costume, and artistic indication of the catastrophe in the "Red Mask," one demanded by the subject, without which the pathetic story was naught, and the political lesson unread, should, I still humbly submit, have obtained for the opera unqualified approbation, and a great pecuniary success. No drama, however interesting or well acted, can survive, if the curtain falls on "a lame and impotent conclusion."

CHAPTER XVI.

In 1834, my "History of British Costume"—the result of ten years' diligent devotion to its study, of every leisure hour left me by my professional engagements—was published by Mr. Charles Knight, as one of the series of volumes issued by "The Society for the Diffusion of Entertaining Knowledge." Amongst my "Recollections and Reflections" few are more agreeable to me, whether I take into consideration the pleasure afforded to me by the pursuit of that study—the stock of valuable and varied information I insensibly acquired by the perusal of innumerable works, I should otherwise never have known even by name—the reputation it has obtained for me throughout the artistic and antiquarian world, on the Continent, as well as at home;—or, last, but by no means least, the service it has rendered to our English historical painters, of which I am to this day receiving the most gratifying proof in letters of acknowledgment from many of the most eminent. That I am indebted

for all this to the counsels and encouragement of Mr. Douce and Sir Samuel Meyrick, I shall never cease gratefully to proclaim; and my pride in the position it has gained for me in that special branch of archæology is, I trust, pardonable, as it is due to no superior talent but a peculiar taste, born of an accidental conversation, educated by the best masters, and indulged in, not for fame—and heaven knows, not for profit—but merely for the fascination I found in it.

In 1872 it may surprise many persons to learn that forty or fifty years ago our greatest painters, poets, and novelists were, as far as regarded a correct idea of the civil and military costume of our ancestors, involved in Cimmerian darkness. To Sir Walter Scott the honour is due of having first attracted public attention to the advantages derivable from the study of such subjects, as a new source of effect as well as of historical illustration; and though his descriptions of the dress, armour, and architecture of the Anglo-Norman and mediæval periods are far from correct, those in the romances and poems, the scenes of which are laid in his own country or elsewhere during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are admirable for their truth and graphic delineation; but though writers of fiction, inspired by his example, took

more pains to acquire information on these points, painters continued to perpetrate the grossest absurdities and anachronisms, often knowingly, under the mistaken idea that they were rendering their productions more picturesque. Did West, the President of the Royal Academy, render his composition more picturesque by representing Paris in the Roman instead of the Phrygian costume? Did Etty gain anything by placing a helmet of the reign of James or Charles I. by the bedside of Holofernes? As I have remarked elsewhere, "Is it pardonable in a man of genius and information to perpetuate errors upon the ground that they may pass undiscovered by the million? Does not the historical painter voluntarily offer himself to the public as an illustrator of habits and manners, and is he wantonly to abuse the faith accorded to him?"

As an example of the extraordinary hallucinations which occasionally possess artists of first-rate ability, my old friend John Liston called on me one day and flattered me by expressing the request of Sir David Wilkie, who was a connection of his, that I would pay him a visit at Kensington and see his great picture (now so well known) of "Knox preaching to his Congregation," before it was sent to the Royal Academy for exhibition, in order that I might point

out to him any little inaccuracy in the costume of the figures he had introduced. I accompanied Liston with great pleasure, and on being shown the picture, immediately pointed out to Sir David that the armed men in the gallery were depicted in helmets of the time of Charles I. or Cromwell, instead of those of the period of his subject. His answer was that he intended to represent persons who were curious to hear the discourse of the preacher, but did not wish to be recognised, and therefore came in armour. I could not help smiling at this explanation, and asked him wherefore, as such was his intention, he had not given them the helmet of the sixteenth century, which, when the vizor was closed, effectually concealed every feature, in preference to that of the seventeenth, with its simple nose-guard or slender triple bars, which allowed the face clearly to be seen? He mused a little, and then half promised to make the alteration; but he didn't; and there is the picture and the engravings from it handed down to posterity with a wilful anachronism which diminishes the effect, whilst it utterly defeats the object of the painter!

But, it may be argued, the dresses of some periods would detract from the expression of the figure, which is the higher object of the painter's ambition. Such and such colours are wanted for peculiar purposes, and

these might be the very tints prohibited by the critical antiquary. To these and other similar objections my answer has always been that the exertion of a tithe of the study and ingenuity exercised in the invention of dresses to satisfy the painter's fancy would enable him to be perfectly correct, and often, indeed, more effective, from the mere necessity of introducing some hues and forms which otherwise had never entered into his imagination. Take for example a circumstance related to me by Sir Samuel Meyrick, many years ago. Shortly after the publication of his "Critical Inquiry into Ancient Arms and Armour," in which the landmarks were first laid down for the guidance of all future antiquaries, Mr. Abraham Cooper, so well known for his spirited battle scenes, called on him with the request that he would kindly inform him what sort of caparisons were used for horses in the reign of Richard III., as he was painting the "Battle of Bosworth Field," and wished the details to be as accurate as possible. Meyrick explained to him that at that period the king's horse would have been covered with housings of silk, embroidered with the royal arms of France and England quarterly. "Oh!" exclaimed Cooper, in consternation, "that will never do! My principal object is to paint 'White Surrey,' and if he is to be muffled up in that manner there will

be nothing seen of him but his hoofs!" "Stop," said the antiquary; "what particular incident in the battle do you propose to represent?" "The last desperate charge of Richard," replied the artist, "in which he slew Richmond's standard-bearer and unhorsed Sir John Cheney." "Then," suggested Meyrick, "it would be fair to suppose that in so fierce a conflict the silken housings of the horse would by that time have been almost in tatters, and display as much of his body as would be necessary." The painter seized the idea. The blue and scarlet housings, slashed to pieces and streaming in the wind, increased the effect of action in the steed, and contrasted admirably with his colour. The picture was most successful, and is, I believe, considered to this day one of the best examples of our English Wouvermans.

Out of the many letters from distinguished artists which from the time of the publication of my little work I continued to receive on this subject, I have selected the following as most interesting to the general reader, the first two being those of a most remarkable man, whose genius and enthusiastic love of high art might have placed him at the head of his profession, but for an overweening vanity, which made "his life a warfare" and his death a tragedy—Benjamin Robert Haydon:—

SIR,

Without the honour of a personal introduction, may I take the liberty of saying I am painting a picture of the Black Prince thanking Lord Audley for his gallantry at the battle of Poictiers, for a descendant of the family.

I agree with you in everything you say about costume, and I shall be infinitely obliged if you will call and see the picture, and give me any advice.

I have got the arms and banners of Suffolk, Salisbury, Warwick, Cobham, but I cannot find those of Sir Walter Woodland, the standard-bearer of the Prince. I have a back view of one of Lord Audley's knights, and I want your advice on the degree of plate covering, &c.; in fact I wish to be essentially correct. If you will excuse the liberty, let me know the day you will honour me, I will take care to be in the way.

I am, Sir,
With every apology, yours obediently,
B. R. HAYDON,
4, Burwood Place,
Connaught Terrace,
Edgware Road.

— Planché, Esq.

I called on him, accordingly, corrected some few inaccuracies of costume, and gave him the arms of Sir Walter Woodland, inviting him at the same time to my house to inspect my collection and the works of Sir Samuel Meyrick. He did not keep his appointment, and the next day wrote as follows:—

4, Burwood Place, Connaught Terrace,
April 8, 1836.

Dear Sir,

I hope you will pardon my *apparent* inattention, in neglecting your summons last night. I was very much fatigued with my lecture the night before, and this morning all my remaining children have been attacked with the measles. So what with attending and helping to ease Mrs. Haydon, I assure you I felt quite unequal to go out. Next Thursday (as I do not lecture again till the 4th) I shall be happy to meet you; in the meantime I hope on Sunday you will call on me. I have advanced the whole picture amazingly in consequence of your advice and assistance, and I beg to thank you most sincerely for Sir Walter Woodland's arms. I am now complete and shall finish as fast as I can. With your help and Sir —— Merrick, we will make it a *Standard* picture as to authority, setting aside its other qualifications.

I assure you, without affectation, I am much gratified by your acquaintance; the unaffected and kind manner in which you have exerted yourself to keep me from error in matters of Heraldry, entails on me an obligation it will take some time to repay.

I am, dear Sir,
Your obedient servant,
B. R. Haydon.

— Planché, Esq.

The next two, a little earlier in date, are from that excellent artist who has so recently been taken from us—Daniel Maclise, the second containing a most spirited sketch in pen and ink of the two figures

he proposed painting, and of which I have the pleasure to subjoin a facsimile :—

63, Upper Charlotte Street,
Fitzroy Square.

My dear Sir,

I know very well I am going farther than our acquaintance would authorize in writing to you, and to ask a favour ; but you will I dare say rather hear my request than my excuse.

Boldly then I would beg of you, if it were in your power, to put me in the way of getting a dress of Charles I., by borrowing or begging, or even if I knew the address of a stage tailor I would give him an order and some black silk. I am about to paint a picture of Charles and Cromwell and Ireton, &c., and the dresses must be faithfully rendered. The picture being life-size we are forced to have the materials to paint from. I would give the world for a pair of large-topped buff boots for Noll—a cuirass and a tunic—but I am moderate—you will scarcely think so—and any information you can give me will greatly oblige,

My dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

Dan. Maclise.

Jan. 1, 1836.

This was followed by a brief note, undated, to the following effect:—"I just send this to your club, to say that you will see what I want by the scratch on the other side."

Here is a facsimile of "the scratch," and it was scarcely possible for him to indicate character more distinctly even in his "life-size" painting, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy that year. From these and other circumstances my circle of acquaintance was greatly increased in the world of art, as well as of letters.

With Peyronet Briggs, who, in 1835, ceased to paint history and took to portraiture,* I passed much happy time at Goodrich Court, the seat of our mutual friend Sir Samuel Meyrick, sketching together on the banks of the Wye in the morning, and in the evening making studies from the suits in the armoury, or the mediæval carvings in wood and ivory in the Doucean collection, bequeathed to him by the venerated antiquary whose name it bore. With William Etty—for whom I purchased one of the finest suits of armour of the reign of Henry VIII. I ever lighted on—Samuel Prout, Brockedon, Uwins, the Landseers, Edwin and Charles, Cattermole, Bonnington, and many others, I soon contracted friendships, of which I possess many valued souvenirs.

* He paid me the compliment of selecting me for one of his first sitters, and the portrait was exhibited that year in company with those of the Earl of Eldon, the Countess Dowager of Cork, Charles Kemble, and Mrs. Jameson.

Black
Satin
broderie
Collar
satin
or
silk
de Chenles

Supposed to be Oliver

At the choice little dinners, also, of my friend Thomas George Fonnereau, in the Albany—a great lover and liberal patron of art—I constantly met Eastlake, Stanfield, Roberts, Maclise, and Decimus Burton, the architect, the latter of whom, I am happy to say, I can still number amongst surviving friends. There was a sketching society existing about that period, held at the houses of the members alternately, to the meetings of which I was frequently invited, and most pleasant and interesting evenings I found them. The two brothers Alfred and John Chalon were constant attendants, and exceedingly amiable men they were. A subject was given by the host of the evening, and each member was allowed a certain time—an hour, I think—to treat it according to his own fancy.

It was extremely interesting to walk round the table and notice the variety of manner in which the same incident was illustrated, according to the peculiar taste and style of each of these eminent men. On one occasion I remember the subject was the seizure of Jaffier's goods and chattels by "the sons of public rapine," as described by Pierre, in Otway's tragedy of "Venice Preserved," act I., scene 1.

While one depicted the chambers and staircases of the Palazzo, swarming with "filthy dungeon villains,"

dragging out or staggering under the weight of costly furniture,

> "——— ancient and domestic ornaments,
> Rich hangings intermixed and wrought with gold."

and another pourtrayed

> "—— a ruffian with a horrid face,
> Lording it o'er a pile of massy plate
> Tumbled into a heap for public sale."

Alfred Chalon contented himself with the single figure of Belvidera, gazing sadly from a window "jour à gauche" on the scene of spoliation supposed to be passing below; while Stanfield, true to his instincts, made a spirited drawing of a canal alive with gondolas, and just indicated the removal of the goods from the water-gate of the mansion.

When the allotted time had expired, each sketch was set up in its turn, finished or not finished, on the table, with two candles before it, and subjected to the criticism of the members—a process which was as productive of good-natured fun and banter as of valuable opinions and suggestions. After this came supper, rigorously restricted to bread, cheese, butter, and lettuce; beer and brandy, or whisky and water, and fortunately for me, no smoking.

I considered it a great privilege to be one of the

very few visitors admitted to these noctes, and my recollection of them is only saddened by the reflection that not one of that gifted and genial company is now in existence. As the sketches of the evening became the property of the member at whose house they were made, it is probable that some night's work may have been preserved in its integrity. What an art-treasure it would be now!

I have digressed a little by devoting this chapter to matters of pictorial art: in the next I will return to the dramatic; apropos to which change of subject I may mention that, in 1830, I was walking in the gallery of the Louvre with Henri Monnier, a charming French painter, who had just made his debut on the stage, when the new King, Louis Philippe, entered, and accosted him, expressing his regret that Monnier had left off painting. My friend bowed and replied, "Sire, je suis toujours artiste—je n'ai que changé le pinceau."

CHAPTER XVII.

The year 1834 terminated with the production of "Telemachus; or, the Island of Calypso," on the 26th of December, at the Olympic, being the last of the classical burlesques, written jointly with Charles Dance, for that theatre, in consequence of an engagement I entered into with Mr. Bunn, to write for him exclusively during the following season, at either Drury Lane or Covent Garden, as he might require.

I had previously agreed to write a drama for him, founded on Scribe and Halevy's opera, "La Juive," which I had seen magnificently produced at the Academie Royal de Musique in Paris, and which was not to be included in the new arrangement. I was, therefore, unable to comply with a pressing request from Bishop, in a long letter to me from Brighton, that I would write an opera for him. In conclusion he says:—"It is quite a grand opera I want, and full of a variety of musical situations. If there is any arrangement we can make about it, pray let me know. I am greatly anxious about the

thing, and know of no one I could feel such confidence in as my *collaborateur* as yourself." It would have given me great pleasure to have been once more associated with him in a work of consequence, but my hands were full, and I could not venture to undertake so serious a task in view of the engagements before me. On the 14th of March my musical drama, "The Court Beauties," was first performed at the Olympic, for the idea of which I was indebted to Douglas Jerrold, and under no other management at that period could it have been so tastefully presented to the public. The scene in which "King Charles II.'s Beauties" were represented in their frames, from the well-known pictures at Hampton Court, by ladies of the company, was a *tableaux vivant* as novel as it was effective. The costume of the latter part of Charles's reign was for the first time seen on the English stage: plays of that period having been previously dressed in the fashion more familiar to the public—that of the Cavaliers of the time of Charles I. and the Civil Wars. All the music was of the seventeenth century; and the dogs that followed their royal master in "The Mall" were Madame Vestris's own pets, and really of King Charles's breed.

A curious fact had crept out at the close of the two national theatres last season. Captain Polhill, who was supposed to have retired from Drury Lane, with

his partner, Alexander Lee, in 1832, had remained behind the curtain, and was the really responsible speculator, while Bunn was the ostensible lessee, first of Drury Lane only, and then of Covent Garden also. The Captain's retirement now was an enforced one. He had no more money to lose, having run through, as he informed me with his own lips, the sum of £50,000 since his first connection with the theatre—a period of only four years. Mr. Bunn was now left entirely to himself, and having nothing to lose, went recklessly on with the two theatres, although the experience of two seasons had so lamentably proved the total failure of the scheme, professionally as well as financially. A tragedy had been weakened at one house, to spare Mr. Warde to strengthen an opera at the other; or the tragic company completely divided, to furnish a scanty entertainment at both houses the same evening.

Thus we had had Mr. Vandenhoff and Miss Clifton playing at Covent Garden, against Mr. Denvil at Drury Lane; while Mr. Farren, who was engaged expressly to perform at Drury Lane only, could not be included in the cast of a comedy at Covent Garden. The audience was sometimes kept waiting a quarter of an hour and upwards at one house, while a performer was finishing his part at the other. On some occasions, indeed, the performer did not stay to finish it, but

made his escape before the last scene of the play, leaving speeches that were indispensable to be spoken by another person; and the whole *corps de ballet* was frequently extracted from the last scene of a piece at Drury Lane, and hurried over for the commencement of one at Covent Garden.

My old friend George Raymond, in his lively memoirs of Elliston, thus incidentally alludes to this insensate speculation:—"Broad Court and Martlett Buildings, from about half-past nine at night to a quarter from ten, exhibited a most extraordinary scene. Actors half attired, with enamelled faces, and loaded with the paraphernalia of their art, were passing and re-passing as busy as pismires, whilst the hurried interchange of quaint words—"Stage waits,"—"Music on,"—"Rung up," &c.,—would have perplexed the stranger with a thousand surmises. . . . At the season of Christmas, when this state of alternation was at its height, the female figure-dancers pattered from one house to another six times during the evening, and underwent the operation of dressing and undressing no less than eight."*

Bunn, however, was not the inventor of this wretched system. He was merely imitating Elliston, his old master, whom it seemed always his ambition to

* Life and Enterprises of Robert William Elliston. Routledge, London, 1857.

rival, if he could not surpass, in the audacity of his speculations. At the time Elliston was lessee of the Surrey Theatre and the Olympic, the actors, who were common to both, had to hurry from St. George's-in-the-Fields over Blackfriars' Bridge to Wych Street, and occasionally back again the same evening. But Elliston was an admirable actor, a great favourite with the public; while Bunn was personally unknown to them—a fact which made considerable difference in the calculation; and as even the prestige of the former failed to justify the experiment, what was to be expected from the unnatural connection of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, under far more disadvantageous circumstances as regarded pecuniary liabilities?

It must surely be obvious to persons even unversed in theatrical matters that the solitary chance of success would have been derived from keeping the performances at one house thoroughly distinct from those at the other: giving Tragedy and Comedy as strongly cast as was possible at Drury Lane, and Opera and Spectacle at Covent Garden; but as I have already shown, Bunn actually put up Tragedy against Tragedy, dividing, instead of combining, his forces, and opposing himself more fatally than any rival could have done.

On the 16th of November, 1835, my version of "La Juive" was produced at Drury Lane, under the title of

"The Jewess," a three-act drama in blank verse, and got up with nearly as much splendour as the original. Its success was great, and in conjunction with Balfe's opera, "The Siege of Rochelle," crammed the house till Christmas, the receipts averaging over £2,000 per week. Thackeray, who was in my box for a short time during the opera, made sketches of Balfe and Seguin. I have, unfortunately, lost that of Seguin, but here is "Signor Balfi," a fac-simile of the man as well as of the drawing.

To the published book of "The Jewess" I thought it necessary to append the following note:—

"In the French opera, Rachel is plunged into the furnace as the Cardinal for the last time beseeches Eleazar to say where he may find his daughter. The Jew triumphantly answers 'la voilà' and rushes up the steps to execution as the Cardinal sinks horror-struck on the stage, and the curtain falls on the picture. I feel it due to Mons. Scribe and to myself, not to suffer these pages to go to press without recording in them my deep regret, that it was considered vitally important to the success of this drama on the English stage, that truth, power, and poetical justice should be all sacrificed, as in the recent case of the 'Red Mask,' to a prejudice—an amiable one, I acknowledge—but still a prejudice. I might almost say a caprice, looking at the permitted catastrophes of many of our finest tragedies and most popular living dramas. I take this opportunity of stating also, that although I have adhered pretty closely in every other respect to the plot of Mons. Scribe's drama, the language, such as it is, is my own, bearing in all the principal scenes scarcely even that general affinity to the French, which in writing on the same subject and preserving the same situations, it would be impossible altogether to avoid; and I mention this, not from any silly feeling of annoy-

ance at the absurd and thread-bare remarks respecting translations in which some who cannot even translate console themselves by indulging—but for the protection of the property which others as well as myself retain in the acting and printing copyrights of this drama."

I have reprinted this note because it touches upon two points of controversy, which nearly forty years have not sufficed to settle, and which has recently been reopened between authors and critics with unabated acrimony.* On the first—that of sensational incidents or catastrophes—I have little to add to the observations I have already made with reference to the termination of my opera "The Red Mask." Unwillingly as I altered that of "The Jewess," I felt that there was not so strong a motive for adhering to the original story as was obvious in the previous instance. The lesson to be read was not so great. The object of the author was not so completely stultified. Still the vengeance of the Jew, whose sons had been burned at the stake, was in strict accordance with the laws of his nation—"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and the *un*christian persecution of the children of Israel during the middle ages, is an historical fact on

* Vide "Dramatists of the Present Day," by Q. Reprinted from the "Athenæum."

which no comment can be too severe—a crime for which scarcely any punishment in this world could be considered inordinate. And yet, the Cardinal is, by the saving clause, introduced in the last act, "quitte pour la peur," and is supposed to live happily with his daughter ever afterwards—though what happiness the poor girl could enjoy under the circumstances it is difficult to imagine. Her death as in the French opera, has now been repeatedly witnessed by approving crowds, in the Italian version at Covent Garden, and I have not heard of any charge of "brutal realism" brought by the press against the manager. On the second point a much wider field of argument presents itself. Originality. The most vehement and virulent denouncer of modern dramatists himself admits "How far a man may avail himself of the labours of another, in a work to which he attaches his own name alone, *is a question not easy of decision.*" There can be no doubt it is a question of degree on which it would be difficult to reconcile the opinions of the writer and his critic: but our modern censor proceeds to remark—"It must not be supposed from what I have been saying, that I object to the appropriation by an author of extraneous aid. Shakespeare levied toll upon mediæval chronicles and Italian tales. Molière, in composing 'Tartuffe,' plagiarised his plot and whole

passages from a foreign original, and even Mr. Dion Boucicault makes use of the labours of other men." "But then," he continues, "Shakespeare gave vitality to what he borrowed, and as I have admitted in my notice of Mr. Boucicault, that prolific playwright adorns what he touches." So then it is not only a question of quantity but *quality*. On that head I will not waste a word—I leave "Q." to enjoy his own opinion as to the literary merits of the gentleman he attacks, being perfectly satisfied that he is quite competent to defend himself, and that his reputation is not likely to be seriously damaged by his anonymous detractor. I will confine myself to the question of originality. Is the ridiculous outcry about translation caused by the sins of modern dramatists? Let us go back to the reign of Charles II.

> "And may those drudges of the Stage, whose fate
> Is damned dull farce more dully to translate,
> Fall under that excise the State thinks fit
> To set on all French wares, whose worst is wit.
> French farce, worn out at home, is sent abroad
> And patched up here is made our English mode."

These lines were spoken by Nell Gwyn in the royal presence, and written to usher in the extravagant play of "The Conquest of Grenada," the bombast of which furnished the witty Duke of Buckingham with a hint for his "Rehearsal," and would occasion it to be laughed

off the stage in five minutes now-a-days. The same carping and cavilling has always existed, and will always exist. Our stage has always been indebted more or less to that of the French, for every description of drama except tragedy, which appears indigenous to England; but the intimacy established between the two nations some fifty years ago, renders it almost impossible for a writer now to escape detection, and the increased demand for novelty drives the dramatist to the foreign market, for such materials as may be most speedily converted to the purpose required.

The crime, if it be one, carries its own punishment along with it—a poor bald, literal translation fails, and a clever, spirited one, succeeds. If the public are amused, they come—if they are not, they stay away, without caring one farthing whence that which they like or dislike is derived. The mere literal translator, whatever may be the merit of his work, cannot, of course, lay claim to its *invention*—if he do, he must take the consequences of his dishonesty—but apart from that, why is he to be assailed and reviled as if he had been guilty of some crime against society? Why is the term "Translator" to be used as one of contempt and reproach against a dramatist, and applied with respect and approval to him who skilfully renders any other species of foreign literature into good English? There

is much more art required to make a play actable than a book readable, and in cases of adaptation or reconstruction, where only the plot, or but a portion of it has been taken, and the dialogue wholly or the greater part of it re-written—why is the dramatist, however humble, to be denied the privilege so kindly accorded by "Q." to Shakespeare, Molière, and Boucicault? I contend that he has made that play his own by the new treatment of the subject and the language he has supplied, whether good, bad, or indifferent; that it is the quantity and not the quality of the work he has done which constitutes his claim to the property, and if that claim is to be disputed in all cases, the number of thoroughly original plays which have obtained any lasting success will be very small indeed, either here or on the Continent, and the title of dramatist would scarcely be allotted to "the swan of Avon," who was stigmatised by his jealous contemporary playwrights as a jay dressed out in their feathers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE extraordinary success of "The Jewess" produced the usual effect of prosperity on Bunn, to whom, contradictory as it may appear, good fortune was always injurious. As if such fair weather was to endure for ever, he went out of town, and made no preparation for a rainy day. Consequently, when the houses dropped as usual after the Christmas holidays, nothing was ready, and I was sent to Paris in hot haste to witness the production of Meyerbeer's opera "Les Huguenots," and make arrangements with the composer for its representation in London. I was present at the last general rehearsal, and of course at the first performance, poor Nourrit, who destroyed himself, sustaining the part of Raoul, Levasseur (a basso *molto* profondo) that of Marcel, Mdlle. Dorus Gras the Queen, and the beautiful Mdlle. Falcon, Valentine. It was a great triumph for all concerned; but there was considerable religious excitement in England at that moment, and I doubted the effect of such a subject on

a general audience in an English theatre, even had there been a chance of its passing through the office of the lord chamberlain. My friend and neighbour George Colman, was at that time Examiner of Plays, and that celebrated wit and dramatist had, from long experience, acquired too keen a sense of latent danger in ordinary cases not to have been startled by a proposal to exhibit at such a moment the massacre of St. Bartholomew. He had had some qualms of conscience respecting the opera of "Gustavus III.," which I had adapted for Covent Garden Theatre in 1833. The assassination of a monarch was an incident none the less objectionable because it was an historical fact while the attempt of Fieschi on the life of King Louis Philippe was an atrocity of recent occurrence; and we had some correspondence on the subject, in which I remember the incorrigible joker contended that "whether a ball was shot at a king, or a king was shot at a ball," made little difference in the mischievous effect it might have on an excited spectator. It was not, however, for me to decide upon the propriety of producing "Les Huguenots;" my mission was only to negotiate. I had, therefore, several interviews with M. Meyerbeer, who paid me the great compliment of saying, "If you will undertake to translate the libretto, and make such alterations in the catastrophe as may be necessary in your opinion to

ensure its safety in London, I will recompose the last act for the English stage, direct the rehearsals, and conduct the opera for the first three nights. You wrote 'Oberon' for Weber, and successfully adapted 'Gustavus' for England. I will therefore do this for you and for nobody else." Highly flattering as was such a declaration from such a man, it did not influence my opinion that no alterations in the libretto which respect for its celebrated author, M. Scribe, would permit me to make, could possibly render the subject eligible for performance in England under the existing circumstances, setting aside the important fact that no English operatic company could have been got together at that period equal to do justice to so magnificent a work. Mr. Bunn viewing the matter in the same light, the project was abandoned. The consequence of Bunn's improvidence was the rushing out in the season of Lent, and during my absence in Paris, of the melodramatic spectacle of "Chevy Chase," which I had prepared for production at Easter, so that when the holidays arrived the piece was some three or four weeks old, and the season, 1835—6, dragged its slow length along unprofitably to its close, at which period also terminated the unsuccessful connection of the two great theatres.

I need scarcely say that I felt greatly relieved at

being released from an engagement which bound me exclusively to a manager to whom, though we never had any personal disagreement, I was in matters of taste and general policy thoroughly antagonistical.

Fastidious as I might be considered by some, in my opinions respecting costume, it may be imagined with what feelings I saw Bunn mingle with the maskers in "Gustavus" in the character of the Emperor Napoleon I., and stand with his arms folded as in the well-known picture of the Exile of St. Helena, in front of the dancers to attract the attention of the audience, who laughed whilst they applauded the ridiculous anachronism—or the annoyance I experienced at his introduction, in spite of all my remonstrances, of a body of archers of the time of our Henry VII., into the procession in "The Jewess," the period of which was coeval with the reign of our Henry V.!

His impolitic neglect of a piece after it had been successfully produced was another vexation to one who had worked in a theatre managed by Madame Vestris. That lady, when not on the stage, was constantly in her private box, watching the performance, noticing the slightest imperfection, and seeking to increase effects instead of allowing them to be gradually destroyed by time and carelessness. Many of our Christmas pieces

were thoroughly re-dressed twice during their run, and consequently as brilliant on the last as on the first night of their performance. Bunn, on the contrary, whose hobby was spectacle, and who occasionally expended considerable sums in "mounting" it, took not the slightest care of the poor thing afterwards, but rode it to death, starved, ragged, and shoeless. To such a discreditable state of dilapidation were the dresses of the supers employed in the aforesaid procession in "The Jewess" permitted to arrive, that the occupants of the boxes nearest to the stage (there were no stalls in those days), amused themselves by identifying the men, as they reappeared in the various scenes, by the particular number of holes in their stockings.

That such false economy or discreditable negligence recoils upon a manager there can be no doubt, and Mr. Bunn suffered more than once from it accordingly —while Madame Vestris was a gainer both in purse and reputation by the contrary policy, and but for other circumstances, might have realised a splendid fortune.

The injudicious and untimely production of "Chevy Chase," was a serious mortification to me, as well as a misfortune for the theatre, as from the favourable reception it met with even in the dull season of Lent, and

notwithstanding many blunders and imperfections owing to my absence, there is every probability that it would have proved "a card," if offered as a novelty to the holiday audiences, for whom I had specially constructed it. The performance of George Wieland, a young pantomimist, who promised to be an English Mazurier, as a goblin-imp, was extremely effective, and Harley and Mrs. Humby as deliciously humorous as usual. The music by Macfarren was agreeable and characteristic, and the overture is still occasionally a feature in the programmes of benefit concerts.

There was a rough good humour in Bunn, particularly in his reverses, which rendered it impossible for me to quarrel with him, especially as it was clear he was by no means desirous to quarrel with me, so the termination of my exclusive engagement was not that of our professional connexion, which lasted nearly as long as he was in management: but I was enabled to employ my pen in the service of others whose tastes were more congenial to me, and was soon busy again writing for the Olympic, the company of which had been strongly reinforced by my old friend Liston, and my young friend Charles James Mathews, the latter of whom had made his first appearance in public, and jumped at once into favour with them on the 7th December, 1835. For Mathews I wrote "Court Favor," and for

Liston and Mathews "The Two Figaros," and at Christmas this year, 1836, "Riquet with the Tuft," the first of the fairy extravaganzas, was performed at the Olympic theatre, being an adaptation from the French Féerie Folie "Riquet à la Houppe," which I had seen Potier in some years before in Paris, and the only one of the long series for which I have been indebted to the French stage. Mathews was Riquet, and Madame Vestris Princess Emeralda. Both were exceedingly doubtful of the result of what they considered a new experiment, for hitherto the subject of the Christmas pieces for six years had been invariably classical. Having been prevented by my engagement with Bunn as before mentioned, from writing for any other theatre than Drury Lane or Covent Garden during the season 1835—36, Madame Vestris had applied to Samuel Lover to furnish her with a Christmas piece for 1835, and he had written her one on the subject of Cupid and Psyche, entitled the "Olympic Pic-nic." Charles Dance, therefore, declared that as some one had been "walking in our sky," it was incumbent on us to change the venue. I proposed Fairyland, which hitting his fancy, I routed out my adaptation of "Riquet," which, like the "Olympic Revels," had been declined at several theatres, and refreshening it with new songs and concerted musical pieces, enter-

tained sanguine hopes of its success, from the novelty of its character. A few days before its production Charles Dance and I were summoned to a solemn conference with Madame and Mathews, in the front parlour of the private house attached to the theatre in Craven Buildings, and it was seriously debated whether or not it would be better, even at that eleventh hour, to revive one of the classical favourites than risk the ruin of the whole season by the failure of this untried species of entertainment. Not being able, however, to shake our confidence, they in some measure regained their own, and the success that attended their exertions was the more gratifying to us all.

In these pieces, still, in consequence of the inconsistent laws then affecting the drama entitled Burlesque Burlettas, James Bland established his reputation as the monarch of extravaganza, in which dominion he so long exercised sovereign sway and masterdom, and has never been surpassed by the successors to his throne. His training in subordinate characters under the best actors of the regular drama, imparted to his tone and manner an earnestness, which, while it gave point to the epigram, trebled the absurdity of the language in which it was conveyed. He made no effort to be "funny," but so judiciously exaggerated the expression of passion indicated by

the mock-heroic language he had to deliver, that while it became irresistibly comic, it never degenerated to mere buffoonery, but was acknowledged by the most fastidious critic to be "admirable fooling." In this true and artistic perception of the nature of burlesque, he has only been equalled by the late Mr. Robson, who, possessing histrionic powers of a much higher order than Bland, occasionally, by his intensity, reversed the well-known quotation, and proved that there was "only one step from the ridiculous to the sublime."

The change in the character of the entertainment was thus alluded to in the finale—a parody on the "Fine old English Gentleman"—by Madame Vestris, as the Princess Emeralda:—

"Old friends, I've the old prayer to make before it is too late,
With your old kindness please to view this change in our old state,
Our old mythology, we thought, was getting out of date,
And so we've left Olympus old and all its Gods so great,
For a fine old English Fairy Tale, one of the'olden time."

The public cordially granted the prayer, and duly honoured the bills we had drawn upon them to the end of the season.

Shortly before the production of this piece I had to lament the loss of my friend and neighbour, the great comic writer to whom I was indebted for the idea of

my first Olympic burlesque. George Colman, the younger, died in Brompton Square, on the 26th of October, 1836, aged 74. The kindly interest he always took in my success, and the encouraging approbation to which it was frequently due, I shall ever remember with pride and gratitude.

The following invitation to dinner, written by him in 1797, was given me by a relative of the gentleman to whom it was addressed. It is in his own handwriting—a parody on Captain Macheath's song in "The Beggar's Opera"—"The charge is prepared, the lawyers are met," and all who are acquainted with the original will admire the neatness and closeness of the imitation :—

"The dinner's prepared, the party is met,
The dishes all ranged—not one is for show.
Then come undismayed—your visit's a debt.
A debt on demand—we won't take a "No."
You'll fare well, good sir, you can't fear *a dew*,
Contented you'll sleep 'twill be better for you;
And sleeping you know is the *rest* of our lives,
And this way we'll try to please both our wives.

"Come to Richmond to-morrow to dinner, or you have lost your *Kew* for pleasing everybody here.

"G. C."

"Richmond, Tuesday night,
Dec. 1797."

CHAPTER XIX.

It was in the summer of 1836, that I had the honour of making the acquaintance of the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland. Her Grace had purchased a curious painting of the 15th century, presumed to be a portrait of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. On showing it to Mr. Dominic Colnaghi, that eminent connoisseur expressed a doubt on the subject, and paid me the compliment of referring her Grace to me, as one who might be able to throw some light on the question. I received forthwith an invitation to breakfast in Hamilton Place, and to examine the picture. I did so, and immediately thought I recognised it as the original of a drawing in the portfolio of Mons. de Gagnières, in the Bibliothèque at Paris, and of which there was an engraving in Père Montfaucon's great work "Histoire de la Monarchie Française." On referring to a copy of the book in the library of the Society of Antiquaries, my opinion proved correct. I wrote to Thackeray, who was at that time in Paris, and he kindly made me a

small copy of the drawing in Mons. de Gagnière's collection, and I was thus enabled to satisfy her Grace that the portrait she had purchased was not that of Charles the Bold, but undoubtedly that of his illegitimate brother, Anthony, called the "Bastard of Burgundy," who fought the famous duel with Lord Scales in Smithfield, in 1467, the fact being further confirmed by his badge of a barbican in flames, mentioned by Olivier de La Marche, the old Historian of Burgundy, which I found painted at the back of the picture. It was at her Grace's table that I shortly afterwards had the gratification of meeting Mr. Samuel Rogers ("that anomalous personage, a rich poet," as Leigh Hunt used to call him) and that brilliant conversationalist Mr. Luttrell, with both of whom I remained on terms of the greatest friendship to the end of their lives. The latter was at that period my near neighbour, residing in Brompton Square; and shortly after our dining together in Hamilton Place, I asked Mr. Rogers, with whom I had breakfasted the following morning, to favour Mrs. Planché and myself by breakfasting with us in Brompton Crescent. I had just previously been subpœnaed as a witness in the case of Jerrold *v.* Morris, which was tried in the Court of Common Pleas; and instead of writing a note to Mr. Luttrell, to ask him to meet Mr. Rogers, I sent him over-night

the subpœna altered to suit the circumstances, with which in his hand he punctually made his appearance at ten in the morning. These two celebrated men, without whom few dinner parties in high life were considered complete, were very differently gifted. Rogers had an inexhaustible fund of anecdote of the most interesting, as well as amusing description, and told his stories in the fewest words possible, so that not only did they never weary you, but they might have been printed without the slightest verbal alteration. Luttrell rarely recounted anything he had heard or seen, but charmed you by the sparkle of his language and the felicity of his epithets. One evening at a party, having accepted a verbal invitation to dinner, under the idea that his son, who was present, would also be asked, and finding subsequently that he was not, he said, "Then who is going to dine there?" "I really don't know, but I believe the Bishop of —— for one." "The Bishop of ——!" exclaimed Luttrell. "Mercy upon me! I don't mix well with the Dean, and I shall positively effervesce with the Bishop."

Though great friends, for many years, and almost constant companions, they would occasionally comment on each other's peculiarities with humorous freedom. At an assembly at Grosvenor House Mr. Luttrell informed me Mr. Rogers had hurt his foot. On express-

ing my regret at the cause of his absence, "Oh!" said Luttrell, "he'll be here to-night for all that; that old man would go out with the rattles in his throat!" I don't think Rogers was five years his senior.

Rogers had the reputation of being very ill-natured, and many instances have been given to me by others. I am bound to declare that during all the time I knew him I never heard him say a really ill-natured thing of any one; but he by no means denied the accusation. "When I was young," he observed to me, "I used to say good-natured things, and nobody listened to me. Now that I am old I say ill-natured things and everybody listens to me." So much has been written about the "Poet of Memory," and so many of his anecdotes circulated, both in print and conversation, that I shall limit my contribution to the "Table-talk" I heard from his own lips, and two or three anecdotes kindly communicated to me by Mrs. Procter. The following, which he told me himself, I give as nearly as I can recollect in his precise words:—

"My old friend Maltby, the brother of the Bishop, was a very absent man. One day at Paris, in the Louvre, we were looking at the pictures, when a lady entered who spoke to me and kept me some minutes in conversation. On rejoining Maltby I said, 'That was Mrs. ——. We have not met so long she had

almost forgotten me, and asked me if my name was Rogers." Maltby, still looking at the pictures, said, "And was it?"

A man stopped me one day in Piccadilly and said, "How do you do, Mr. Rogers?" I didn't know him. "You don't remember me, sir. I had the pleasure of seeing you at Bath." I said, "Delighted to see you again—at Bath."

"It was the fashion formerly to make your guests drunk; and there was a gentleman staying in a country house, and they made him very drunk, and they tarred and feathered him, and put him to bed. In the morning he woke, and he wasn't sober then. He rose and went to a cheval-glass, and he looked at himself and said, 'A bird, by ——!'"

Mrs. Procter's reminiscences I shall also give verbatim, from the notes with which she has favored me.

"Driving out with him," she writes, "I asked him after Lady Matheson, who was continually making him presents, and he said, 'I don't know Lady Matheson.' He then pulled the check-string and said, 'Henry, do I know Lady Matheson?' The servant replied, 'Law, Sir! my lady comes to see you, and sends you presents nearly every day.' We drove on, I feeling very uncomfortable, and wishing I had never

mentioned the lady. Mr. Rogers took my hand, and raising it to his lips said, 'At any rate, I have not forgotten you.' Once breakfasting with him, a man was spoken of, and the whole party said, one after another, what a nice man he was, &c., &c., &c. When it came to me I said, 'I don't like him.' 'No more do I,' said Rogers, 'only I had not courage enough to say so.'"

"At his table the conversation never degenerated into small gossip. He always gave it a good tone. I once said 'I wonder how it is that the —— are able to keep a carriage?' He immediately turned to his man Edmond and said, 'Go to —— Square, with Mrs. Procter's and Mr. Roger's compliments, and they wish to know how they contrive to pay for their carriage.' I felt this a very proper rebuke."

Rogers had very peculiar notions respecting poetry. The highly imaginative had no charm for him. He could not appreciate the grandeur of oriental language of the Old Testament, and constantly contrasted it with the simple pathos of the New. He would quote the celebrated description of the Horse in the Book of Job, "His neck is clothed with thunder, and he crieth Ha! ha! to the lightning." "That's nonsense," he said to me—then turning to the 11th Chapter of St. John, he pointed to the two words which form the 35th verse, "Jesus wept." "*That's* poetry!"

The same taste induced him, whilst he admired the plays of Shakespeare to speak contemptuously of his sonnets. At breakfast one morning, Mr. Procter and I undertook their defence. Rogers challenged us to repeat a line of them, and to his infinite amusement neither of us were able. I got as far as "O how much more doth beauty," and there I stuck. Procter could not remember a word. He who had sung the "Pleasures of Memory" chuckled triumphantly. We whom it had treacherously deserted sat humiliated, but "of the same opinion still."

It was much the same with respect to music. Simplicity and brevity alone had charms for him. "Is not that delightful?" I asked him one evening at Mrs. Sartoris's. It was an air by Sebastian Bach. "Yes, and so short," was the reply. With Dr. Johnson, he wished that everything "wonderful" in the way of execution or ornamentation was "impossible." During the performance of a "grand scena," no matter who was the singer, it was his custom to ask any one who sat near him, "If you heard those sounds in a hospital wouldn't you suppose some horrible operation was going on?"

The jokes on his personal appearance never seemed to disturb his tranquillity. "Rogers, you're rich enough, why don't you keep your hearse?" is a well-known

question addressed to him by some wicked wag—I think Lord Alvanley; but he was as hard upon himself. He tried to cheer my wife, who was becoming a confirmed invalid, by assuring her that he never knew what health was till he was fifty, and that when he was a young man he wore a yellow coat, and was called the Dead Dandy. Singularly enough, after the accident which deprived him of the power of walking, it might truly have been said he kept his hearse, for he was carried in his chair and put into his carriage by a door made at the back of it, in perfect conformity with that vehicle which drives us to the bourne from which no traveller returns. The last time I breakfasted with him, the other guests were Lord Glenelg, Sir David Brewster, and Mr. Babbage; but his strength and memory were fast failing him, and he survived his old friend Luttrell but a few years. London society has yet to seek their successors.

Amongst the eminent personages I met in Hamilton Place, one of the most interesting was the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville; who, born in 1755, must, at the time of my introduction to him, have entered his eighty-second year, and certainly presented—as Dr. Holland truly observed on that occasion—the finest example of the *mens sana in corpore sano*, at that advanced age, that had probably ever been known. This grand old

man, in person as well as in mind, was one of the guests at the first small dinner party to which I was invited by the Duchess-Countess; the others being her Grace's eldest daughter the Countess of Surrey, afterwards Duchess of Norfolk, and to whom I was ultimately indebted for my position at the Heralds' College, Lady Palk, Mrs. Holland, the accomplished daughter of the Rev. Sydney Smith, and author of his biography, and Mr. Richard Sneyed of Staffordshire; Dr. Holland (now Sir Henry) joining us towards the end of the dinner. Mr. Grenville entertained us with several stories of the eccentric Marchioness of Salisbury, who was burnt to death at Hatfield, 27th November, 1835—pious people declaring it a punishment for her playing cards on Sundays. On the occasion of the first great Handel Festival in Westminster Abbey, May, 1784, at which Mr. Grenville was present, Lady Salisbury arrived very late. The King (George III.), Queen Charlotte, and all the royal family were in their places, and the performance had begun. In the midst of a piece of music, a loud hammering was heard, which disturbed and offended the audience, who expressed their displeasure promptly and vehemently: but in vain. On went the hammering without intermission. The music ceased; the assembly rose in an uproar; and their Majesties despatched Lord Salisbury—at that

time Lord Chamberlain—to ascertain the cause of so indecent a disturbance. It proved to be his own wife. On entering the box reserved for the Lord Chamberlain and his family, her ladyship found it had been divided, to accommodate another party, and had insisted on carpenters being sent for and compelled to pull down the partition, in utter disregard of King, Queen, Lords, and Commons, singers, fiddlers, and the awful British public!

Going with her daughters to the Chapel Royal St. James's, one Sunday morning, and not being able to find a seat, she said, in answer to the question of "Where shall we go, mamma?" "Home again, to be sure! If we can't get in, it's no fault of ours. We've done the civil thing."

Mr. Grenville survived the Duchess-Countess, and occupied the house in Hamilton Place, where he died, leaving the whole of his magnificent library to the British Museum. Her Grace was my warm friend to the end of her life, never losing an opportunity of showing me a courtesy or doing me a service. Rogers always spoke of her to me as "Our Friend—that very great lady." And she was as gracious as she was great. Lord Byron, who was introduced to her in Paris when she was Marchioness of Stafford, says in one of his letters, "Her manners are princessly;" and

the term happily conveys the idea of that natural dignity of demeanour combined with the most charming affability which was her peculiar characteristic. Her Grace cultivated as well as patronised the arts: not only drawing and painting, but etching on copper, with great ability. A privately printed folio volume of views in Orkney and Sutherlandshire drawn and etched by herself, and presented to me early in our acquaintance, is a cherished and valuable memorial of her kindness.

CHAPTER XX.

It was also in the year 1836 that I became acquainted with the Countess of Blessington. Having received a kind invitation from her ladyship to visit her in Seamore Place, May Fair, where she then resided, I went one evening with Charles Mathews, who had travelled with Lord and Lady Blessington and been their guest on the Continent, and "kissed hands on presentation." From that evening to the day of her departure from England—never to return—I was her constant visitor in Seamore Place and at Gore House, to which she shortly afterwards removed, and was present at the latter on two very remarkable occasions, which will be spoken of in their proper chronological order, as I must now proceed with my recollections of 1837. They are not very agreeable to me. Imprimis, I had been unfortunately compelled to be one of the first to put the Dramatic Authors' Act in force against a gentleman for whose talent I had every respect, and with whom I had been for some years on

terms of intimacy as a neighbour, as well as an eminent member of the theatrical profession.

Mr. Braham, who had obtained the sanction of His Majesty, King William IV. for the erection of a new theatre in King Street, St. James',* was ill-advised enough to produce the opera of Oberon, in which he had been the original Huon, and knowing that I stood pledged to the Proprietors of Covent Garden not to allow the performance of my libretto at any other theatre in London, employed Mr. Gilbert A'Becket to write a new one to the music of Weber. This he had a perfect right to do, however opinions might differ as to the taste or delicacy of the proceeding; but, as may naturally be imagined, however, the difficulty might be surmounted as regards the spoken dialogue, it was next to impossible to divorce from such music as Weber's, the words he had so wonderfully wedded to it, and which Braham, at whose express solicitation Weber had composed the scena "O, 'tis a glorious sight," should surely have been the last man to have put asunder. The consequence was that nearly all the vocal portions were given with the original words, and not with those printed in the books sold in the house. The Proprietors of Covent Garden called upon me to

* Erected for him, after the designs of Samuel Beazley, and opened in 1835.

execute my part of the contract with them and prohibit the performance at the St. James'. I was bound both legally and morally, to protect their interests. I expostulated with Mr. Braham, who denied, in writing, that any words of mine were sung, although I, myself, Charles Dance (who had attended with a book and marked the pieces) and many others had heard them.

I had, therefore, no remedy left me but the law, which I most unwillingly had recourse to. The Honorable Henry Fitzharding Berkeley and Mr. Angelo Selous,* both at the time utter strangers to me personally, had been present at the first representation, and most handsomely came forward in my behalf. The evidence of Dance, Oxenford, and several others of my brother dramatists was objected to on the ground that they were interested witnesses; but the case was so clear that I obtained a verdict, and a subsequent motion for a new trial being unsuccessful, Mr. Braham had to pay very dearly for his experiment. As no pecuniary benefit could, under any circumstances, have occurred to me, while had I lost the action I should have been saddled with ruinous expenses, it must be obvious that

* Brother of the well-known artist, and who has subsequently distinguished himself as a dramatist, by the production of "True to the Core," a nautical melo-drama, which obtained the first prize of £100, under the will of the late Mr. T. P. Cooke, and was performed with great success at the Surrey Theatre, in 1865.

I was simply actuated by an honourable sense of what was due to those who had paid me liberally for my labour, and relied upon me for the protection of their rights. It is to record these facts, in justice to myself, that I have adverted to one of the most disagreeable recollections of my professional life.

An amusing occurrence during the trial is worth mentioning, as a similar retort has been put into the mouth of Claude Melnotte in "The Lady of Lyons." Mr. Adolphus, who was the leading counsel for the defendant, in his cross-examination of Mr. Berkeley, who had deposed to his perfect recognition of my words, quoted a passage from Shakespeare, and sneeringly asked him if he recognised those words? "Certainly not, as *you* pronounce them," answered Mr. Berkeley contemptuously, raising a general laugh at the expense of the learned gentleman, which he carefully avoided provoking again that morning.

In June, 1837, my English version of "Norma" was produced at Drury Lane. I had translated the opera by Bunn's desire expressly for the appearance of Madame Schroeder, the celebrated German Prima Donna, whom he had induced to make her appearance on the English stage. My labour was perfectly unnecessary as far as the lady was concerned, for not a single word

of English did she ever attempt to utter throughout the performance.

This eccentric experiment, and the thoroughly disgraceful representation by a most incompetent company at the commencement of the following season of Beaumont and Fletcher's fine play of "Bonduca," revived under the title of "Caractacus," with a last scene which Bunn engaged me to add for the introduction of a Roman triumph, on which he had set his heart and staked the success of the piece, were nearly the last flounderings of that extraordinary *mis*manager in the Slough of Despond, to which he had mainly helped to reduce the two great national theatres.

Of all his reckless acts, none to my knowledge ever equalled his production of "Caractacus." The actors, poor as they were, had not the slightest chance allowed them. Everything was neglected for the procession, of which he undertook the whole arrangement and responsibility. Day after day the stage was occupied by crowds of supers, horses, goats, and other animals, and eventually the play was produced positively without one complete rehearsal. The performers were alternately quizzed and hissed,—a clever little boy, who played the son of Caractacus with great spirit and intelligence, nearly retrieving once or twice the fortunes of the play; and the procession—the grand Roman triumph,

the magnificence of which had been puffed for weeks—was deservedly roared at and hooted. A more dull, dreary, disjointed, ineffective, tedious "march past" I never witnessed, and the curtain descended amid a storm of disapprobation.

Although I had little to do with the piece in any way, and had repeatedly expressed my dissatisfaction to Bunn as regarded the capabilities of his company, and my serious misgivings respecting the effect of the procession—the classical costume, however well represented, not being comparable to the mediæval in magnificence—I was extremely distressed at my name being mixed up with so ignominious a failure. Nor could I help pitying even the unfortunate impresario, much as he deserved the disaster he had so obstinately courted; for, in addition to his loss and vexation as a manager, he was at the moment suffering severely from an excruciating complaint to which he was subject, and having no stage manager competent to assist him, it was really astonishing he did not break down in the midst of his self-imposed labour and incessant anxiety.

To do him justice, Bunn had all the courage as well as the recklessness of the inveterate gamester, and bore his misfortunes with more equanimity, indeed, than he did his successes. He was never so good humoured, or even so jocular, as after a decided failure, and, how-

ever provokingly he might involve others in his embarrassments, it was almost impossible to be angry with him.

His endurance of physical agony was equally remarkable; and it was only in good health and prosperity that I ever knew him inactive or ill-tempered.

My last transaction with him took place this season. I undertook to make an English version of the "Zauberflöte," or "Il Flauto Magico," for him; and it was very creditably performed on the 10th of March, 1838, under the title of "The Magic Flute," with the whole of the music by Mozart, under the superintendence of my old friend, Tom Cooke. Templeton was the Tamino; Henry Phillips, Sarastro; Gubilei, Monastatos; and Balfe, Papageno. The difficult music of the "Queen of Night" was fairly executed by Mrs. E. Seguein; and Miss Romer, who had profited by her careful study of Madame Malibran, made an agreeable Pamina. As this opera is rarely performed in Italian without considerable censure being cast on the absurdity and want of interest in the plot, I will take the liberty of reprinting a few observations I appended to my "Book of the Songs," &c.—all that was published of the English opera, simply in justice to the original author and the composer, who has immortalized his libretto.

"The object of the manager of Drury Lane Theatre being to introduce for the first time Mozart's magnificent opera, 'Die Zauberflöte,' with English words to an English audience, the writer of those words considered himself bound to adhere, notwithstanding its assumed want of interest, to the original story in its main features, and to follow the march of the principal incidents, in the belief that the very peculiarity of the material which Mozart had chosen to illustrate would render it a work of infinite hazard, not to say of presumption, to endeavour to substitute any other subject, however superior it might be in dramatic effect. He has consequently confined his alterations to the working out, as well as in him lay, of the allegory dimly shadowed forth by the German author, and utterly lost sight of by his Italian *traducer*.

"According to Plutarch, the Egyptians held two principles—one good, the other evil. The good principle consisted of three persons—Osiris, Isis, and Orus their son. The evil principle was Typhon, to whom all bad passions, diseases, tempests, and earthquakes were imputed. Osiris was synonymous with reason and light; Typhon, with the passions without reason, and therefore with darkness: and the whole plot of the opera turns upon the struggle between these two oldest of contending parties for the mastery over

Pamina, the daughter of an Egyptian enchantress, and priestess of Typhon, ycleped the Queen of Night. The magic flute, by the agency of which Tamino is destined to acquire an influence over the mind of Pamina, has the power of inspiring love, the most potent of human passions. Bestowed on him by the powers of darkness and evil, it is of course merely sensual; purified by the powers of light and reason, its magic is made subservient to the best and holiest of purposes, and guides the faithful pair through all worldly dangers to the knowledge of heavenly TRUTH, as typified by their initiation into the mysteries of Isis."

Surely the triumph of Truth and perfect Love over the delusions and degrading passions of this world, even though veiled in allegory and tinged with a little Teutonic transcendentalism, is no ignoble theme for either the poet or the musician; and those who have studied the national character of our German kinsfolk will feel that it was a captivating one to the young composer, who thoroughly entered into the feeling and understood the object of the author. At the same time it is no wonder that amongst the thousands who have only acquired their knowledge of the story from the wretched stuff professing to be a translation of the Italian version, sold in our opera-houses, the majority should

not only fail to find any interest in the story, but feel utterly unable to comprehend it. The favourable reception of "The Magic Flute" put upon the stage with appropriate scenery and costume, the authorities for which were kindly pointed out to me by Mr. Pettigrew, who "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," consoled me for the *contretemps* of "Caractacus," and brought my business transactions with Mr. Bunn to a creditable close.

CHAPTER XXI.

I NOW approach with considerable reluctance a subject on which I would willingly be silent, but that it has been more than once distantly alluded to in the public press, and directly mentioned in the letters of that celebrated composer, Félix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, a translation of which was published by Lady Wallace some eight or ten years ago.

In January, 1838, I was honoured by an invitation from Messrs. Chappell, the well-known music-publishers of New Bond Street, to write an opera for Mendelssohn, with whom I was personally acquainted, having met him frequently in society during his second visit to England in 1832; and after some preliminary negociation, a mutual agreement was signed on the 24th of February, which, that the case may be understood, I transcribe verbatim.

"Memorandum of an agreement made this 24th day of February, 1838, between E. Chappell, of the one part, and J. R. Planché on the other.

"Mr. Planché engages to write a full opera for musical performance at one of the large theatres, on the following terms:—

"1st. That the copyright of the said opera shall remain the property of the said J. R. Planché, except as hereinafter mentioned.

"2ndly. That the price for the performance of the said opera to be charged by Mr. Planché to managers of country theatres (that is, of all theatres in the United Kingdom except those in, or within five miles of, London) shall not exceed the sum of twenty shillings nightly.*

"3rdly. That the sum to be paid the said J. R. Planché by the said E. Chappell for writing the said opera shall be three hundred pounds, lawful money of Great Britain, to be paid in the following manner, viz., fifty pounds on the signature of the present agreement, a second sum of fifty pounds within a month of this date, one hundred pounds on the delivery of the complete manuscript of the said opera, and the remaining sum of one hundred pounds on the day following the first night of the performance of the said opera.

"4thly. That the said E. Chappell shall have all the profits and benefits arising from the right of representation of the said opera in London, or within five miles thereof, and shall be at liberty to make arrangements with any manager for its performance within the aforesaid distance from London.

"5thly. That the said E. Chappell shall have the entire and exclusive right of publishing, with the music, all the poetry or words of the vocal portions of the said opera, for the sole benefit of the said E. Chappell, but not the right of

* The object of this stipulation being that the amount of the charge should not prevent the performance of the opera.

publishing such poetry or words independently of the music.

"And the said E. Chappell doth hereby agree for the purchase of the said opera, at the price and under the regulations aforesaid, the said J. R. Planché also agreeing to deliver the complete manuscript of the said opera within six months of the present date, under the penalty of one hundred pounds.

"Provided always, that the said J. R. Planché is not prevented completing the manuscript by the necessity of alterations or additions suggested by the composer of the music of the said opera, which alterations or additions the said J. R. Planché, however, engages to make (to any reasonable extent) previous to the first performance of the said opera.

(Signed) "E. CHAPPELL.

"Witness, W. CHAPPELL."

I had previously written to Mendelssohn to express my pleasure at having been selected to write an opera for him, and received from him the following reply:—

LEIPZIG, 12th Feb., 1838.

DEAR SIR,

I was very happy to receive the information in your letter of the 31st (l. m.), that you had kindly consented to write the opera which I am going to compose for the English stage. A good, truly poetical libretto which inspires me at once was, since long, the great object of my wishes, and I may now look forward to its speedy realization, as *you* have undertaken it. I dislike the five acts as you do: it should be three or two. I prefer three acts, but think there could be a subject which would require to be divided into two; and then I should have no objection.

I wish it, as you already know, to be a kind of historical opera; serious, but not *tragical*—at least, not with a tragical end: but as for dangers, fears, and all sorts of passions, I cannot have too much of them. I should also like to have some persons, if not comical, yet of *a gay and lively* character in it; and last, not least, I wish for as *many choruses*, and as active ones, as you may possibly bring in. I should like to have a whole people, or the most different classes of society and of feelings, to express in my choruses, and to have them as a kind of principal persons opposed to the solo singers. Could such a subject be found? Before all, I wish the subject had no likeness whatever to any of the now-popular operas: they have something so exhausted in them which I dislike. As you ask me to name a model, I should say a subject between "Fidelio" and "Les Deux Journées," of Cherubini would suit me most—more like the first with regard to the internal plot—to the development of passion; and like the second in the historical basis—the activity of the choruses and the serene atmosphere which breathes throughout the whole, notwithstanding all the perils and the narrow escapes which occur in it. In short, could you find me a subject in which some virtuous, heroical deed was celebrated (as it is in "Fidelio"), which (as "Fidelio" is the triumph of faithful love) represented the triumph of some noble, striving feeling, equally known to every one of the hearers who knows at all any feeling, and who could then see his own internal life on the stage, but more concentrated—in short, translated into poetry (of course, it ought not to be a common or base feeling, as they have now so often in the opera-house—for of this every one has quite enough at home, and should not find it elsewhere, at least not in art); and if that same story happened in a country, or time, and a people which could

give a lively background to the whole (be it dark or not), which, in reminding us of history, could in the same time *remind us of our present time* (as, for instance, the dark figure of Cardinal Mazarin forms a background in the "Deux Journées"; but it could be more prominent still), and if every act of the opera had its own effects, its own poetical point which comes to issue in the finale (as also in "Les Deux Journées," at least in the first and second acts). If you could find such a subject, that would be the one I wish for; and if ever I can succeed, I should be sure to do it with such a subject. Query, can it be found?—and to this question I most anxiously expect your answer.

Excuse my confused description—I would hardly be able to give a good one in my own language; till now, it is more a matter of feeling than of knowing with me; but of this I am sure, if such a subject as I think of should be found, it would force me at once to compose the music. I could not do otherwise; and that, I think, would be the best and most promising way of beginning my task. Your assistance, I trust, will lead to the realisation of this long-felt wish of mine; and thanking you for your kindness, and hoping to receive a speedy answer, I am, my dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

FÉLIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

I have to add that I should be at liberty to begin the music about the end of summer. Whether I shall be able to bring it to England myself is very uncertain, as I have never an idea in what time I shall finish a work; and whether my engagements will then allow me an absence from my country, —I hope so, however.

I need scarcely say with what avidity I read, or how

carefully I studied, this long and interesting letter, or with what diligence I set to work in the earnest desire to find a subject which would thoroughly satisfy the requirements of my gifted correspondent, who, by his question of "Can such a subject be found?" appeared to doubt the possibility himself.

However, after a few weeks' cogitation, I fancied I had found one, and on the 11th of April forwarded to him a sketch of the plot and my idea of the characters, the former being original, and built on an historical basis, viz., the siege of Calais by Edward III.—the story serious but not tragical, and the trial and triumph of faithful love, as well as the celebration of heroic deeds and the illustration of noble passions, forming exactly the combination he had so minutely described as the kind of opera which would inspire him at once, of course, presuming I could work out my own conceptions successfully.

To this communication I received, on the 4th of May, the following :—

LEIPZIG, 18th April, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,

Accept my thanks for your letter of the 15th, which I received three days ago,* and the contents of which I re-

* The 15th, therefore, was the date of the receipt, and not of the writing of my letter, of which I have no copy. It seems strange in these days to find it took five days for a letter to reach Leipzig from London.

peatedly thought of since the receipt. I am not versed enough in poetry, fully enough to understand the development of those ideas of which your letter gives me the sketches. Particularly the first act is still indistinct for me, as I do not understand how the lover in disguise, and in the Queen's train, will be able to give an interest to the whole of an act; and whether his escape and arrival in the town are events so important in themselves as to keep the interest alive during it. But of this you are of course the better judge, and I am only not able to imagine by myself those things which are familiar to you.

The subject which is to form the basis seems to be a beautiful one, and the devotion of those patriots, together with the contrasts you pointed out, will certainly afford many fine situations for music; particularly in the second act. I am able to trace them already by myself. Also in the third, in which, however, I do not quite understand the motive why one of the lovers resolves to take his rival's place (or are they to be friends from the beginning ?), and the means by which he makes him forget his duty. From all this you may conceive how anxiously I expect to hear from you, and to know more of the scenes which you intend to distribute in the opera, and more of the whole idea of it. I hope you will soon let me have a plan of the scenes of the whole, when I shall be able to form a distinct idea of the opera, which I am not skilful enough to do at present, by those hints you pointed out. Let me also thank you for the interest you take in procuring me a subject so quite in accordance to my wishes, and for the kindness you show me thereby. I should be sure to prove to you by my music how grateful I feel, and how great an importance I attach to this proof of your kindness, if in arts the will could be taken for the deed; but as unfortunately this cannot be, it is only left for me to wish I could write a music

worthy of your poetry, and expressive of those motives which you will so abundantly afford me. I hope to hear soon from you, and beg you will direct your letter to Berlin (Leipzig Strasse, No. 3), for which place I intend to start to-morrow, and where I shall stay during the next month. Believe me, always to be,

Yours very truly,
FÉLIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

I had now but four months left, within which I was bound under a penalty of one hundred pounds to deliver the MS. of the opera complete to Mr. Chappell, and, with another important engagement pending, there was no time to be lost; so briefly explaining to him the few points which he had not clearly comprehended, and expressing my gratification at his approval of the subject and opinion that it presented many fine situations for music, I went to work with a will, and by the end of July the two first acts were forwarded to him by Mr. Chappell.

The receipt of them was acknowledged by Mendelssohn in the following letter:—

LEIPZIG, 12th August, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received the two first acts of the opera last week, and you [may] imagine how eagerly I perused them immediately. I was struck with the many beauties they contain, and have to thank you most sincerely for the delightful prospect which such a poetry holds out to my music. My only

wish is that I might be able to do justice to it, as I feel it ought to be done. My particular favourites are Gaultier's scena and Guillaume's air, in the first act; and before all the ensemble in the second, and the duet which follows. I also like Guillaume's air, which you call a sacrifice to the galleries; and the second finale of course. What a brilliant occasion for the display of different passions in music they afford! I only hope you will soon send me the last act, that I may have a view of the whole, to see the issue to which you intend to bring it. There are some alterations which I could wish, which I shall take the liberty to state, as you kindly allow me to do so at the end of your letter. They relate principally to the character of Marrant, which I think could become, perhaps, more prominent and active, and would afford perhaps a kind of contrast to the great quantity of serious characters and music, and to a few parts of the first act; but of all this I can only speak when I know the whole, and therefore (as well for my anxious wish) I beg you will soon send it, and allow me then to avail myself of your kindness in case I should then still wish for any alterations. I must also thank you for the beautiful verses, which are so truly musical, that I have nothing more to wish for in this respect; and upon the whole there are so many, so great beauties in this work, that I anticipate the greatest delight from the composition, and wish I might soon be able to begin it.

May I request you to inform Mr. Chappell of my receipt of the two acts, and to ask him to send the rest by the same occasion to Berlin (Leipzig Strasse, No. 3)? My family forward it immediately to this place.

Believe me, very sincerely yours,

FÉLIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

Was it possible to receive a more gratifying letter? Could any one have anticipated, after perusing the glowing encomiums contained in it, "the change" which gradually "came over the spirit of his dream," and the dying out of all his enthusiasm?

The third act of the opera was completed and delivered to Mr. Chappell in due time, and forwarded as had been requested. Shortly after Mendelssohn received it, he appears to have been attacked by the measles, and was, as he informed us on the 4th of October, by the hand of a friend, unable to use his eyes either for reading or writing.

On the 10th of December he addressed the following letter to Mr. Chappell:—

DEAR SIR,

Being quite recovered from my illness, I have now perused Mr. Planché's libretto with the attention it deserves; but the subject is of so great an importance to me, that I must address you a few questions which I hope you will answer quite sincerely and openly, as they are of consequence for the success of the opera, in which you are as interested as I am.

I should not like to begin my task before I am quite at my ease on the subjects of these questions. You sent me a copy of the MS., so I suppose you are fully acquainted with it, and may tell me whether an opera so thoroughly serious, without any comical or even lighter character in it, would do for an English audience. And then I hear, by an intimate

friend of mine, to whom I communicated the poem, that there already exists a theatrical piece on the same subject as the opera, and universally known in that form in England. If that is the case, great part of the interest would be lost, and I do not know if I should be right in writing the music when the chance would be against its success. Of course I cannot put these questions to Mr. Planché himself (whose beautiful verses and thorough skill I admired in this as in his other works), but I want to have an impartial opinion, and think it your own interest to give it me. To others I would not write, because things like these ought to be kept secret. I beg you will not mention anything of this letter to Mr. Planché, and answer it as soon as you possibly can.

I am, very truly yours,
FÉLIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

This letter reached London in the absence of Mr. W. Chappell, who was at that time in Germany, and received there another communication from Mendelssohn a few days afterwards, having had a personal interview with him at his house in Leipzig :—

LEIPZIG, 29th Dec., 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,

The questions I put to you about Mr. Planché's opera, and which you wished to have written down, for thinking of them, were materially these.

I expressed a doubt whether a poem so entirely consisting of *serious* personages, without a more lively character in it (or a characteristic, romantic, comical, &c., &c., one), would be able to give sufficient interest to the English public as they now are in the theatres. I wished to know your opinion

on that subject, as you are not less interested in it than I am myself. When Mr. Planché first proposed the story, I was pleased to find it one of the Middle Ages, because had it been earlier (Roman, for instance), anything like characteristic occupation, or parts (like soldiers, boatmen, &c.), could not have been introduced to *vary as much as possible* the incident and style throughout.

I thought, when I only had the two first acts, that for instance Marrant was to be a character which could be considered as forming a contrast to the nobler ones, which are so beautifully drawn, that he would give occasion to a brighter, more characteristic, perhaps more comical style, at least to a more contrasted one. I missed something which gave an insight into the time and the customs of that time, not only in the heroical sphere.

As it is, he (Marrant) gradually disappears from the action; and I do not know if the uniformity of sentiment which now pervades the whole, necessary as it may be, would be able to produce that animation amongst the hearers, which they always seem to feel when a series of different and equally striking characters is developed before them. I admired the concerted pieces, and the poetry throughout, and think it most beautiful. It suggested to me in several places musical deas, which I noted down while reading, and found then how adapted to music these flowing and expressive verses are. The only wish I had was the one I uttered before; some character or other that might bring more stirring passions into action, create a greater contrast, and also a greater suspense, till it is brought to issue.

All this is already expressed and asked in a letter of mine, which you will now find in London, as it was sent during your absence. I hope before all things that these objections will not make you think me too assuming, or asking for im-

possible things. I thought it right, with so important a work, to go as safely as might be, and try to express my feelings and the objections I might have rather beforehand, than to feel them during the task, and when it is too late to be remedied. Whether, and how that can be done (if you admit the justice of my remarks), is the question to which I most anxiously await your answer.

Your obedient servant,
FÉLIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

WM. CHAPPELL, Esq.,
Hotel de Bavière.

This second letter to Mr. Chappell, purposely written for my consideration, was handed to me on his return to London, and although its perusal caused me certain misgivings of a foregone conclusion in the mind of Mendelssohn, I, at Mr. Chappell's request, wrote to him immediately, answering the questions he had asked, and endeavouring to explain to him points which he appeared to have misapprehended. A copy of this letter unfortunately I did not keep, but a subsequent one will suffice to indicate its character, which was simply explanatory. *After a lapse of nearly four months* a letter was received by Mr. Chappell, and to the following effect :—

LEIPZIG, 23rd April, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am excessively sorry that the affair of the opera has turned out as I anticipated when you were here; and I

cannot tell you how deeply I regret it. Mr. Planché, in his last letter, declines those alterations which I thought so necessary to the success of the work, and says that this subject could not be treated differently, in his opinion; that it had light and shade enough, and that I was to dismiss all fears on that subject. After having perused the poem once more with the greatest care and anxiety, I am not only still of my former opinion, but begin to fear that we both may be right. That the subject is treated by Mr. Planché as it ought to be; but that in itself it does not afford me those advantages which I consider as essential to the success of a dramatic piece—that variety of human character—of situations—of feelings. You tell me you are pledged to take the opera beforehand; but I would not do you a service if I composed it under the impression which I have of it at present, and I cannot therefore do anything else than send back the MS., which I hereby do, and promise that nobody shall hear a word of it from me till it is brought out and set to music by another composer. I adopt that course rather than to try, lose time, and produce a work which would neither content you, nor Mr. Planché, nor myself, and by which every one of us three would be injured, more or less. You know how deeply I wished to compose some of Mr. Planché's beautiful verses, and you may form an idea with how great a reluctance I come at last to the conclusion which I now have communicated to you.

Recollect the promise you gave me here at my German stove, not to give up this idea, even if the first attempt should fail. Believe me, that I consider it as very important to me, that I do not wish anything more anxiously than to compose a good dramatic music to a good dramatic poem, and that I should be extremely sorry if I must give up the hope of seeing this wish realised by you. I must leave off writing

to-day. I am going to Frankfort to-morrow, at which place all communications will reach me till the end of June, directed "Poste Restante."

Believe me always,
My dear Sir,
Yours very truly,
FÉLIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

WM. CHAPPELL, Esq.,
Music Publisher,
Bond Street,
Oxford Street.

By the same post another of the same date reached me:—

LEIPZIG, 28th April, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot sufficiently express to you how sorry I was to learn, by your last letter, that you decline to make those alterations of which I pointed out my ideas to Mr. Chappell, and which of course were not derived from a propensity to comic parts in a serious plot, and less still from a desire to find fault with a poem written by you, in which I admire so many and most exquisite beauties, but only from a feeling of which I could not get rid, from a kind of instinct, which, however wrong it might be, spoke loud enough not to be overheard,* and of which I tried to explain the reason, as well as I could, in those lines to Mr. Chappell. Finding, however, that you entirely differ in opinion about every one of the above-mentioned alterations, and giving your experience and views of the subject the preference to my own (as indeed I ought to do, and always shall), I gave the matter all the consideration it deserved, perused the opera with

* *I. e.*, too loud for anything to be heard above it.

your remarks, and your last letter once more as minutely as I could, and tried to overcome the objections which again and again occurred to my mind. I am sorry to say I have not been able to do so; and as you positively affirm that the subject ought not to be treated differently, I begin to fear that the subject is not such as I could hope to compose with success. Indeed, I am afraid I should not do justice to your verses, if I was to set them to music under the impression which I have of the opera, and of which I have not been able to get the better; and my talent, I know, is not great enough to produce something worthy of yourself and your country, and the demands which I make, if I should force myself to the task without feeling the impulse, and being compelled by it. Believe me, that nothing could have been more according to my long-felt wishes than to compose an opera by you, and that I cannot give up this hope but with the greatest reluctance. However, I would not be true to you and myself, if I had not stated to you my sincere view of the question, and I hope, by the sincerity of this avowal, you will believe me how deeply I regret it, and how truly I hope and wish to find another opportunity of composing your beautiful verses, and a subject about which our opinions and feelings perfectly agree, and which will hold out a chance for my composing it as successfully as all your works deserve, and as my powers may allow me to do.

I shall not be able to cross over to England; businesses of every kind will not allow me to do so; but let me hope for some future period when I shall meet you, and when we may talk over all that which I can but imperfectly express in writing.

Believe me always
Very truly yours,
FÉLIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

Prepared as I was for a *hitch* of some description, from the tone of his letter to Mr. Chappell of the 10th of December, and the subsequent memorandum, as it may be called, of the 29th, which foreshadowed hesitations and apprehensions of more or less importance, this decided rejection and return of the opera astounded as much as mortified me, there being no foundation whatever for the reason he assigned as his principal motive, viz., my having declined making the alterations he had vaguely suggested. I had done nothing of the sort. A reference to my agreement with Mr. Chappell, which I have printed expressly for this purpose, will show that I had no power to decline; but, on the contrary, was bound to make alterations "to any reasonable extent, previous to the first performance of the opera," and as the extent of those alterations had not been clearly defined, I had no grounds in this stage of the proceedings for objecting to make them on the plea of their extent being unreasonable. Nor should I have availed myself of them, had they existed, as the conclusion of the correspondence will prove. I would have made any sacrifice or concession sooner than have had my opera definitively rejected.

The above letters were enclosed to me, with the accompanying note from Mr. Chappell:—

MY DEAR SIR,

We are placed in a most unfortunate dilemma by Mendelssohn's returning the opera with the enclosed letters. I wrote to him, urging the completion of the work, and this is his answer. In these circumstances I place myself entirely in your hands, as I really know not what to do about it. Have you another you could offer him in lieu of it?

Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

WM. CHAPPELL.

I saw Mr. Chappell immediately on the subject, and he wrote by that day's post to Mendelssohn:—

8th May, 1839.

DEAR SIR,

On receipt of your letter, I immediately saw Mr. Planché, who regretted as much as I do that you should have returned the MS., as he had not *declined* making alterations, but had expressed his opinion that the opera would not be objected to by the English public on account of not having a comic part, and that he considered it would be better without it. He is, however, perfectly willing to give way, if you deem it necessary for your music, provided he can alter it to his own satisfaction; for which purpose he has taken back the manuscript to reconsider the whole, and I most anxiously wish he may succeed to your expectations, as it will be a considerable loss to me to have the opera, for which I have already paid, thrown upon my hands.

I am, dear Sir,

&c., &c., &c.

The following day I wrote to Mendelssohn myself:—

20, Brompton Crescent,
Near London,
May 9th, 1839.

My dear Sir,

No words of mine can express the regret and surprise with which I received the information contained in your letter of the 23rd ult. I immediately called on Mr. Chappell (who, having paid me a considerable sum for the opera, is by your rejection of it placed in a most unlooked-for and disagreeable position), to see what could be done to prevent the heavy loss he must experience by your declining to compose the work—a decision which I am sure you must have come to from some misconstruction of my last letter. Unfortunately, I did not keep a copy of that letter, and am consequently unable, at this distance of time, to remember the exact expressions contained in it; but of its *spirit* I am fully aware, and can assure you that nothing was further from my intention than positively to "*decline making*" any alterations in the opera, as a reference to your own letters of the 10th and 29th of last December to Mr. Chappell will prove. In those letters, to which mine was a *reply*, you do not request me to make any alterations—you simply ask for "an impartial opinion" upon two points on which you are in doubt, and you put them in the form of questions, thus: 1st, "Whether an opera so *thoroughly* serious, without any *comical*, or even lighter character in it, would do for an English audience?" 2ndly, In reference to the existence of "a theatrical piece on the same subject," whether you "should be right in writing the music" to mine? And in your second letter of the 29th, after recapitulating your doubts on the first point, you say, "whether and how that can be done"

(the introduction of comic relief) "*if you admit the justice of my remarks*, is the question to which I most anxiously await your answer." Now, my dear Sir, my letter was only written to satisfy your mind upon these doubts—to answer your two questions by assuring you that an opera *thoroughly* serious would do for an English audience, who have quite changed their natures of late upon this subject, and invariably reprobate the introduction of comic parts in serious operas—witness the failure of Mr. Rooke's opera of "Henrique" *last week*, at Covent Garden, in consequence of the attempt to weave comic with serious interest; and the great success in England of "La Sonnambula," "Anna Bolena," "I Puritani," "Marino Faliero," "Massaniello," "Guillaume Tell," "The Red Mask," "The Jewess," &c., all without a single comic situation or piece of music (spirit and melody being all that is required), and that the very drama to which you allude, on the same subject, would, if *now* produced, run the risk of being damned for its comic characters alone. It has no pretension to the title of an opera, and is never played now-a-days, and even if it were, would have no more to do with an opera than the performance of the tragedy of "Othello" has with Rossini's opera of the same name.

Thus much for matters of *opinion*, on which *alone* you desired information. Now for matters of fact. Although I naturally objected to make alterations, if I could succeed in convincing you that your fears were ill founded, yet I by no means decline endeavouring to make them when you say, as you now for the first time have done, that they are indispensable to your comfort and inspiration. Let me therefore beg of you to reconsider this subject, and let me know as soon and as nearly as possible the number and nature of the alterations you require, and if I can in any way manage to make them, be assured I will do so. I put it to your good

feeling, both to me and to Mr. Chappell, who must be a great sufferer by your relinquishing the task, to take a brighter view of the matter, and to remember that (as you say) we are all equally interested in the success of the work, and therefore we can have no reason for misleading you as to facts, or for thwarting your wishes.

You have spoken most flatteringly of the two first acts. Will making Marrant more prominent in the third—rendering him the agent of Gaultier in the misleading and detention of Guillaume, be sufficient for your purpose? What style of *comic* effect do you desire?—a joyous drinking song? Pray give me a hint on which I may work directly, as it is no use my beginning to alter till I know more precisely what sort of alteration will be most satisfactory to you; and believe me, my dear Sir, with every sentiment of regard and respect,

Your sincere friend and admirer,

J. R. PLANCHÉ.

To this I received no answer till the 17th of June, when arrived the following:—

FRANKFURT,
June 17th, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

From your letter of the 12th ult., which I have just received, it appears how difficult a task it is to combine a work, the two parties living at a great distance, and one of them expressing himself but so imperfectly, as I do, in a foreign language. After what you say, I must have misunderstood your last letter but one, but I also am certain that my last communication to you through Mr. Chappell must have appeared to you in a different light to what I intended it to be, for your answer to it (that last letter but

one) stated plainly your difference of opinion, and dissuaded me from asking for alterations. I could not but think your view of the subject contrary to mine. You quote those letters of mine which I have written before I had the third act, or before I had been able to peruse the whole poem with the attention it required. Afterwards I saw Mr. Chappell, tried to explain my ideas and wishes to him, tried to write them down because he wanted me to do so, and that was the first time I was able to express my idea of the whole work, and of those alterations I thought necessary. Your answer related more to my former letters (as I now see) than to my conversation and the written memoranda which Mr. Chappell took with him for you; and although I am now aware that I have misunderstood your meaning, and fully appreciate your kindness in offering to comply with my wishes, yet there must still be a misunderstanding, confirmed by my want of skill in expressing myself, for you speak of *comic* pieces, *comic* situations and characters—of the public not liking clowns introduced in a serious piece; while I never thought of asking for comic scenes, for comic persons who might excite the laughter and merriment of the gallery. Nothing can be further of my meaning than this. But while I write this, I feel the difficulty of expressing myself more accurately than I must have done. I might have quoted comic scenes as an example, but the real objection I had in view was the want of what I may call *characteristic* scenes, a full display of one or different lively and living characters. I wanted somebody to excite, not the merriment, but the eager interest of the gallery as well as of every hearer, and I even think, in my communications to Mr. Chappell, I always used the word characteristic in preference to comic situations. The leading characters of the opera, excepting Gaultier, seemed to me to act as men more bound by the necessity of the poem, of the

plot, than by their own human feeling, as real living people do. Even Gaultier's heroic deed in favour of that brother whom he hardly knows, and whose character is as little developed before our eyes, loses, by that reason, much of its effect; but there is particularly the detention of Guillaume, the way in which it is performed, which I may quote as an example of what I mean, if I ask for more character in the situation. I see only the stage and its necessities in the whole of the proceeding. The same feeling occurs to me in the first meeting of Blanche and Guillaume in the first act; also in the conclusion of it, when Guillaume is made prisoner. Even in the scene of Gaultier and the King—of which I admire so many beauties, as the whole depends on the King's magnanimity and pardon, and as the doubt of it (or the leaving these qualities uncertain for the spectator) would chiefly induce us to fear the death of the surrendered—I think the reiterated pardon must weaken the effect the second time it is granted, of (on?) which depends the whole opera. When I only had the two first acts, I did not know the manner in which the development would take place. I thought my objections were only relating to incidents, and the whole of the characters would be proved necessary in the third act. I could then dwell upon the great beauties I found in the concerted pieces and the poetry everywhere, and could not form an idea of the whole and of its meaning. As soon, however, as I perused it as a whole, and the more often I did so, the same objections would occur to my mind. The making Marrant more prominent in the third act, rendering him Gaultier's agent, and involving him in the intrigue, would certainly meet my wishes much more than the introducing of *comic* character would have done. But I am afraid this alteration would only lead to others; and the question is, whether the improving one part of the drama

would not hurt others, and give no better effect to the whole? The best way for us to agree would have been (or I hope I may say, would be) to settle in the first instance the plot, the different scenes and actions, with the distribution of the concerted pieces; for, if we are agreed on that subject, I have seen enough of your poetry to know that I should then have no further objection to make, and that your verses are as easily composed as read. Perhaps you will say that the plot, "la marche de la pièce," is nothing to the composer; but you will *not* say so, knowing better than I do how important it is that no verses, no music, can make up for a want of strength in that quarter.

Once more I say, and, believe me, it is no compliment, but a heartfelt truth, that you are by very far the best judge in these things; that, in every other question of the kind, I would much rather be guided by your opinion than by my own; but here, when both must combine their efforts, I feel that I should not be able to overcome the impression which I tried to describe to you, and which has become stronger the more I read and thought of the poem. Could I hope to have one day an opera by you produced in the way I mentioned before? I mean, in which we agreed about the plot before the verses, and all the rest were written—in which we then advanced, step by step, so that no misunderstanding could take place, as we live unfortunately at such a distance from each other—could I preserve that hope, it would be a true happiness to me, and I should consider that view as a most wished-for and delightful prospect. If you think all this could be done with the opera, pray send me that "plan" you mentioned, in order to go hand in hand from the present time. If you think (as I do) that such a rebuilding would be rather dangerous, you will not only find one, but many composers, who will be too happy to have a work from

your pen, to whom you might give it, and perhaps at a leisure hour would feel disposed to think of a plot, which you would then send me, and which would lead to the result which I am so anxious to obtain.

Now, my dear Sir, believe me that only a sense of what is due to yourself and Mr. Chappell, as well as to myself, could induce me to write to you all this at such a length.

Excuse me, and believe me to remain,

Your very sincere admirer,

FÉLIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

It would be an easy though a long task for me to shatter this elaborate letter to pieces, and to demonstrate that where it was not defective in argument, it was glaringly opposed to fact.

Had I been a rich man, I would have immediately returned to Mr. Chappell the £200 he had paid me for four months' hard and anxious labour; and, recovering my property, have briefly expressed my regret to M. Mendelssohn that I had failed in my endeavour to write an opera to his satisfaction, and that he had so long delayed coming to that conclusion; but I was not in a position to act so high-handedly. I had conscientiously earned my money—I had written what I felt ought to succeed; and, mortified and irritated as I was by Mendelssohn's conduct, I suppressed my feelings, and determined to give him no chance of evading his promise to Mr. Chappell. With this determination, I answered Mendelssohn thus:—

20, Brompton Crescent,
June 27th, 1839.

My dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of the 17th instant, and without hesitation accept your proposal of reconstructing the opera, as I am determined that no objection of mine shall cause you to decline the work, if there is a possibility of meeting your wishes, and I prefer remodelling the present opera to writing one on another subject, for two reasons. In the first place, it would be some time, perhaps, before I could find another story so completely combining all the elements for the particular kind of opera you described to me in your first letter; and, secondly, I feel that, could I directly find one, the same difficulties might arise, and I should in addition have to compose *every portion* of the poetry, while in *this*, if I can manage to please you in the conduct of the plot, most of the lyrical pieces may be allowed to stand. To lose no time, therefore, I have requested Mr. Chappell to send you back the copy of the opera, as I have the original, and can therefore refer to any alterations you may propose; for the best way would be, if *you* would be kind enough to take the opera, *scene by scene*, and tell me *exactly* where the alteration should commence, and of what nature it should be. I will suppose, for instance, that you have no objection to the opening chorus,—the arrival of the Queen and the introduction of Gaultier. In that case, I gather from your last letter that your first objection is to the King's magnanimity in pardoning Gaultier, as in some measure tending to weaken the effect of the last act. Now, before you decide upon this point, allow me to show you my reasons for having so arranged it. In the first place, the circumstance of Edward's giving a safe conduct to the bearer of the intercepted letter

is historical (the anecdote is in Avesbury); and secondly, I do not see how it weakens the effect of the pardon in the third act, because that part of the dénouement is so notorious that you cannot mislead the audience into any supposition that he (the King) will act otherwise by representing him of a more cruel or passionate disposition in the first act. It is only the incidents that lead to it that can be new to the audience, do what you will with it, and surely when you desire *characteristic* situations, you would not make Edward do that which would be anything *but* characteristic, magnanimity and high chivalric feeling being the grand historical features of that monarch's character; to say nothing about the fact that I have endeavoured to work in every incident mentioned by the chroniclers of the period, and that this particular one is highly dramatic. Edward's permitting the poor creatures who were turned out of Calais to pass in safety through his lines, and giving them also food and money, is another instance of his magnanimity on record, and mixed up with the plot of the opera. You seem to think that on the second pardon depends the whole opera—my notion was very different. I considered the opera depended upon the story of the two brothers; the historical portion being merely the *ground* upon which it is worked, according, indeed, to your own words in your first letter, where you say, "The dark figure of Cardinal Mazarin forms a background to the Deux Journées, but it could be more prominent still." King Edward is my Cardinal Mazarin, and I have tried to render him more prominent. The nobility of his father's blood showing itself in the illegitimate burgess—his heroical deed, not, as you say, "*in favour of a brother whom he hardly knows*," but to ensure the happiness of the woman he adores, by saving the life of a favoured rival at the expense of his own—the greatest proof of love which any man could give—

the struggles between love, duty, and gratitude in the breast of Blanche—the doubt cast upon the *real intentions* of Gaultier—these are the points on which I thought the interest of the opera depended—these are the situations which I thought characteristic, and which would be strong enough to sustain it were we to cast the historical *cadre* altogether away.

If I have failed in the execution or in making them clear to you, as your widely different view of Gaultier's motive above mentioned makes me think must be the case, I must endeavour to remedy the evil; but at the same time must in this way point out to you what my intentions were. With regard to the way in which the detention of Guillaume is managed in the third act, *I do not like it myself*, and shall be most happy to alter it; but to keep up the interest of the piece it still must be done without the audience, or at least without the other characters being aware of Gaultier's object. He must be considered as intending to make away with his rival, not to save him. However, let us settle the first act, and something may arise out of our alterations which may help us.

You will not, I am sure, misconstrue my motives in defending my view of the plot, as it is only by this sort of discussion of the disputed points that we shall be able to come to a clear understanding. It will be a long business, but I hope satisfactory in the end; as I trust you will meet me in the same spirit, and allow for my feelings and prejudices, as I am willing to do for yours.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Yours truly,

J. R. PLANCHÉ.

Nearly *four months* elapsed before Mendelssohn ac-

knowledged the receipt of this letter. At length came one dated :—

LEIPZIG, Oct. 17th, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

Since I received your last letter of the 27th June, I waited daily for the copy of the opera which Mr. Chappell was going to send me back as you mentioned therein; but as this has not been done till this day, I avail myself of an opportunity to answer your kind lines, to tell you how very much obliged I am to you, and to ask how the thing stands at present, as I do not receive a communication from Mr. Chappell. I must confess that, notwithstanding the kindness and indulgence with which you meet my wishes, I think the work of remodelling the plot scene by scene an extraordinary difficult one, and do not know how it might be done without injuring the work as it now is. Had your leisure allowed you to think of another story (either connected with the same historical event or not), and had you been able to communicate to me the plot beforehand, I am sure that in a few weeks, and with a few letters, the affair would have been brought to the issue which I so heartily wish for, and it would have saved you the trouble of reconstructing a work which in its present shape might find many friends and admirers, and to which my objections might be merely personal, and arising from my individuality. Could it still be the case, and could Mr. Chappell's delay in sending the manuscript contribute to your compliance with my wish, I should think the chance a lucky one, and am certain success would prove it such. But I need not tell you how sorry I should be if the delay had another cause and other effects, and if you were tired of my objections, my wishes, and the whole thing. Let me hope that such may not be

the case, that I may still look out for a pleasure which I certainly know how to appreciate, and with which I could not part without the greatest regret. Pray give me soon an answer, and believe me always very truly and gratefully yours,

FÉLIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

To this I replied by return :—

MY DEAR SIR,

I hasten to acknowledge your letter of the 17th ultimo. I certainly understood Mr. Chappell to say that he had returned or would return the MS., but I now find upon inquiry that he waited your bidding to do so. I have now desired him to forward it to you without delay, and am still constant to my purpose of endeavouring to alter the present opera to meet your wishes if possible. If I cannot do so, we only remain where we are, and the opera is still actable in its present shape. My reasons for preferring this mode to writing an entirely new one are these. In the first place, *I like my subject*, and, according to your first letter (and even your second letter) you liked it too. With regard to the treatment of it, I cannot hope to be more fortunate in any other opera, as I did describe to you all the principal situations previously to my commencing this one, and received, as I imagined, your full sanction for them. I might therefore again fall into as unfortunate a mistake, and that I could not afford.

As it is merely in details that we differ, I am willing to hope that I can meet your wishes with less trouble than you imagine. At all events, we will try one act, and I shall then see better than by any other mode your real objections. Be so kind, therefore, on the receipt of the MS. to send me a list

of the alterations you require in the first act, and we shall soon come to a clear understanding one way or the other.

Believe me,
Dear Sir,
Yours very truly,
J. R. PLANCHÉ.

The MS. was forwarded to him; but from that time forth I never had a line from him on the subject. No list of required alterations was sent me, and the affair fell to the ground with the immediate loss of £200 to Mr. Chappell, and a prospective one to me beyond calculation, setting aside the £100 I was to receive after the first performance of the opera. Infinitely more serious to me than any pecuniary disappointment was the blighting of the hopes I had every reason to entertain of my name being associated with Mendelssohn's as it was with Weber's. What the former could have meant by this observation in his letter to Klingeman, dated August 10th, 1839, "Planché's opera gets on very slowly, and possibly I may have a new oratorio ready before his text is completed,"* I am utterly unable to comprehend, as my "text" was completed and delivered to Mendelssohn according to agreement in 1838, and in August, 1839, I was anxiously awaiting his reply to my letter of the 27th

* "Letters of Félix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, vol. ii. p. 160.

of June respecting his suggested alterations. Still more incomprehensible is his assertion in a letter to Furst, of Berlin, dated January 4th, 1840: "Planché's text can never, even with the best will on both sides, become such a work as I want."* If that was his decided opinion, why did he not frankly state it either to Mr. Chappell or me?—and if it be to my opera he alludes when he says in continuation, "I would rather never compose an opera at all, than one which from *the very first I considered indifferent*," how am I to reconcile this with the flattering eulogiums of his letter to me of the 12th of August, 1838, in which he declares that he "was struck with the many beauties" contained in the two first acts, and thanks me for "the delightful prospect which such a poetry holds out" to his music, and, in reference to the finale of the second act, exclaims, "What a brilliant occasion for the display of different passions in music they afford!" concluding with, "I must also thank you for the beautiful verses, which are so truly musical that I have nothing more to wish for in this respect, and, upon the whole, there are so many, so great beauties in this work, that I anticipate the greatest delight from the composition, and wish I might soon be able to begin it"? I repeat

* Letters of Félix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, vol. ii., p. 181.

the question—if these words were sincere, is this an opera which he thought "indifferent from the first"?

Even in his "Memoranda," addressed to Mr. Chappell the 29th December following, he says, "I admired the concerted pieces and the poetry throughout, and think it most beautiful; it suggested to me in several places musical ideas which I noted down while reading, and found then how adapted to music these flowing and expressive verses are." What more could a composer of genius require? I am not going to imitate Sir Fretful Plagiary, who, when Dangle ventures to suggest that the interest of the play rather falls off in the fifth act, exclaims, "Rises, I believe you mean, sir!" Granting, for the sake of argument, that Mendelssohn's objections were well founded—had I not promised—was I not bound to remedy them if in my power, and did he ever afford me an opportunity? Did he really know himself what he wanted? I am very much inclined to believe he did not. In his arguments with his friend Furst, from whom he was endeavouring to obtain the libretto of an opera, he says, "I have resolved, unless we first agree about the *scenarium*, never to beguile any poet into undertaking so laborious a work which may after all prove vain. This *scenarium* may be prolix or brief, detailed or

merely sketched."* Now, in my case he had the *scenarium*, first merely sketched, and then, as he evidently misunderstood it, detailed in a second letter; and during four months he never wrote a line in the way of objection, nor raised the least difficulty till I had completed the opera and some "intimate friend" had frightened him by the intelligence that "there was a theatrical piece universally known in England" on the same subject and in the same form as my opera. This, of course, must have been Mr. Colman's "Surrender of Calais," which his friend ought to have told him never had any pretension to be called an opera, had long ceased to be acted, and the plot of which had not the slightest resemblance to mine, nor contained a single incident in common with it, beyond that of the surrender. Had there been anything really objectionable in my libretto—any peril to be apprehended from its subject, or any risk of a failure which might compromise his reputation, there might have been some reason for his excuses. There was nothing of the sort. No demerits of my drama could have interfered with the success of his music. The language he pronounced "beautiful," "exquisite," "suggestive," in the highest degree. Of the "stage and its necessities," which he

* Ubi supra, p. 182. La Muette de Portici (Massaniello) found as little favour in his eyes. Vol. i., p. 288.

disregarded, it is clear he knew nothing—had not the remotest idea of the importance of that attention to them which had already enabled me to place upwards of one hundred dramas of nearly every description successfully on the stage, and had obtained for me the grateful thanks of Weber, the flattering confidence of Meyerbeer, and the continued co-operation of Bishop. In proof of this, read his description to his mother of Victor Hugo's powerful play of "Ruy Blas," to which he refused composing an overture, as the piece was "detestable and more utterly beneath contempt than you can believe;"* and his opinion that the "Guillaume Tell" of Scribe is neither "good nor dramatic;" and that his "Robert le Diable" is "a *cold, formal extravaganza*," to which he "cannot imagine how any music could be composed."† It is no humiliation to be condemned in such company, and it should be some consolation to me to know that neither in France, England, nor Germany could he find a man "capable of writing the libretto of an opera." In 1831 he was disappointed by Immerman of Dusseldorf, and in 1840 by Furst of Berlin; and at the time of his death, in 1847, was just screwing up his courage

* Letters, vol. i., p. 154.

† Letters of Félix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, vol. i., p. 317.

to set Geibel's "Loreley," "an ideal theme," which has been described by a competent critic, "as assuredly not calculated to please a modern operatic public, who prefer flesh and blood characters."*

I must apologize to the general reader for the length to which I have protracted this chapter; but to the musical public, now so numerous, to the admirers of Mendelssohn, who are almost equal in number, this correspondence will not be without interest. In the 'Athenæum' of the 9th of December last, in a notice of the Mendelssohn concerts, the writer, after observing that "something more than the fastidiousness of Mendelssohn must have operated to prevent the composition of an opera," adds that "as he could have had the assistance of Scribe and Mr. Planché, it is certainly curious that his abstinence was so prolonged," but discredits the idea prevailing in Germany that his objections and hesitations arose from a dread of competition with Meyerbeer. I will not undertake to say what was the particular dread which possessed him; but that it was *fear*, and nothing else, that influenced his conduct, I am thoroughly convinced. He yearned to compose for the stage—to add his name to those of his great countrymen, Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven,

* Athenæum, December 9, 1871.

Weber, and Meyerbeer; but invariably shrunk from the effort the moment an opportunity presented itself.

> "Letting I dare not wait upon I would,
> Like the old cat in the adage."

In 1845 he expressed to Mr. Frederick Chappell a desire to write a cantata with me; but I was then too much occupied, could I even have had any confidence in his promises, and in 1847 he died, to the universal regret of the musical world, without composing an opera. His treatment of mine caused me the keenest mortification, and inflicted on me the greatest disappointment I have ever endured.

My libretto was eventually transferred by the Messrs. Chappell, whose property it is, to Mr. Henry Smart, and a considerable portion of it was in score when a grievous calamity—a serious affection of the eyes—prevented his completion of the work.

It is very doubtful that a National Opera House will ever be successfully established in England—at any rate in my time; but, vain as I may appear, I have still faith in my unfortunate opera, which, notwithstanding the rapid progress of musical taste and knowledge in this country during the thirty years that

have elapsed since it was written, would require little, if any, alteration in its construction to render it conformable to the most advanced ideas of the Lyrical Drama.

END OF VOL. I.

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